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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Winter gardens

Striking designs dusted with frost

Best plants for ***SEASONAL INTEREST***

Trees for bees

Tony Kirkham's top picks for pollinators

GIFTS TO MAKE A *GARDENER'S CHRISTMAS*

9 OF THE BEST GARDEN GATES

Festive florals

Creating unique natural decorations

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Welcome

JOHN CAMPBELL

Although the days are darker and colder now, our gardens can still offer a multitude of pleasures. If we design and manage our plots with the whole year in mind, we'll never be short of delights, even in December, when a dusting of hoar frost can bring a new beauty to skeletal seedheads, or low winter sun backlights tall grasses just so.

In this issue, we delve into the season with some wonderful winter gardens. Created over many years by its dedicated owners, Hunworth Hall in Norfolk (page 38) is proof of how valuable a strong structure can be in the colder months, with its framework of clipped hedging and diverse topiary shapes. The Winter Garden at Wakehurst in West Sussex (page 70) provides interest of a different sort, with bright, welcome colour from flaming stems and winter-flowering shrubs. Discover the delicate decorations crafted by artist Olga Prinku from dried flowers and foraged finds (page 46), and Jimi Blake's plant picks for this month (page 26), as well as our guide to Christmas gifts for gardeners (page 19).

It's my first issue as editor, and I couldn't be prouder to join the magazine and team. We're planning lots of exciting ideas and features for the future. Keep up with everything we're doing on social media and via our newsletters.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year,

Stephanie Mahon

STEPHANIE MAHON, EDITOR

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Foraged berries and foliage for Olga Prinku's delicate decorations, page 46.

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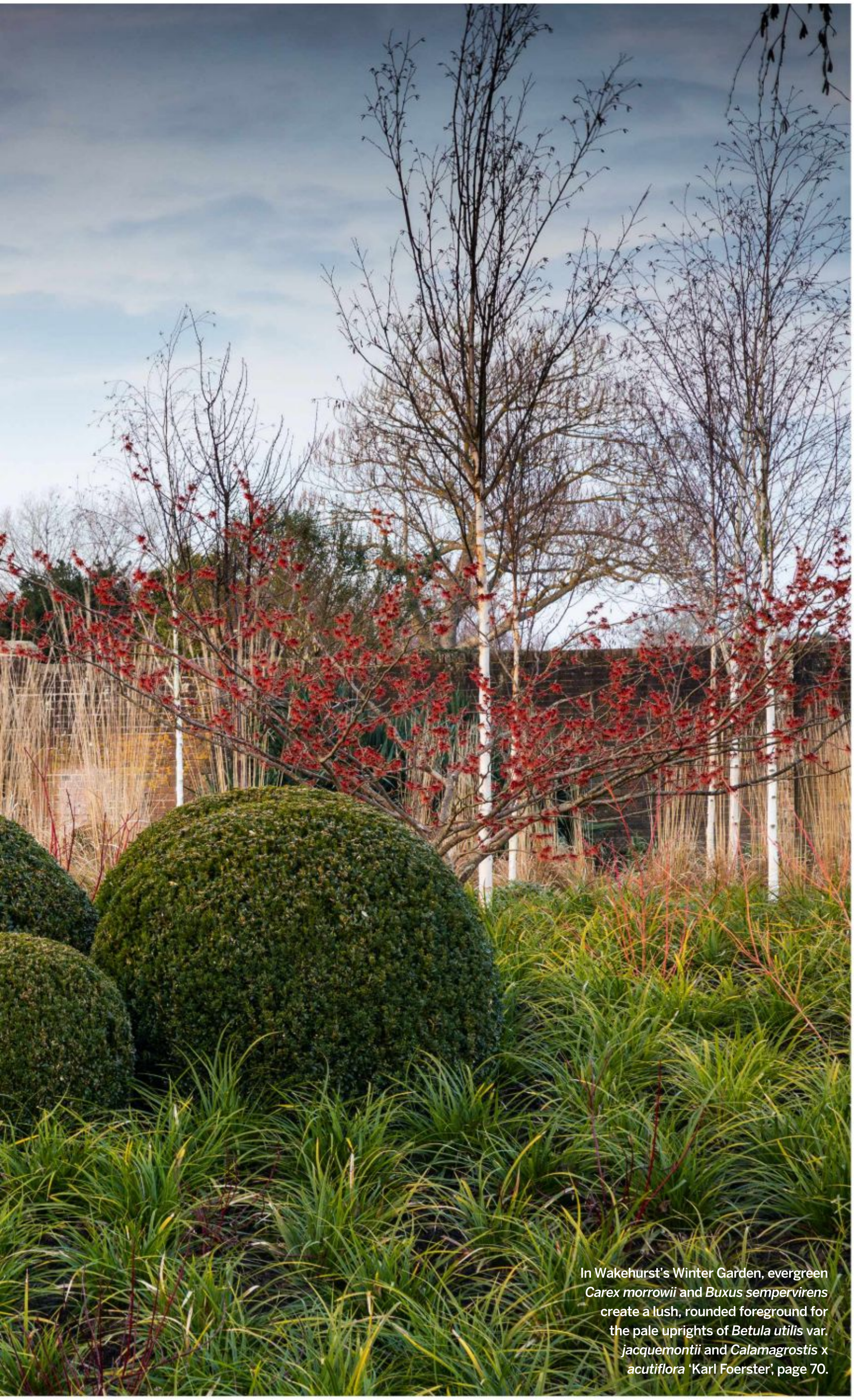
RICHARD BLOOM



In Wakehurst's Winter Garden, evergreen *Carex morrowii* and *Buxus sempervirens* create a lush, rounded foreground for the pale uprights of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* and *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', page 70.

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COVER IMAGE

Hunworth Hall, Norfolk, by Richard Bloom

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- Book now for our tour of Japan's most interesting gardens in the company of horticulturist Hannah Gardner – page 11
- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 32
- Win all 14 of our gardening books of the year† – page 105

† Books competition open to UK residents only.

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Design: Luke Arend

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Alice Pattulo
Alice enjoys the gardening insights she gets illustrating Aaron Bertelsen's column, page 34. *"I like the idea of sowing winter lettuce seeds to keep the fresh greens coming in the colder months."*

Tony Kirkham
Tony picks the best trees for pollinating insects, page 52. *"We're quick to choose a tree for its ornamental attributes, but shouldn't biodiversity and the needs of pollinating insects factor too?"*

Alys Fowler
Alys interviews Garden Organic's head of horticulture, page 68. *"Chris's CV reads like no other. It's truly an adventure fuelled by a very serious love of plants and dedication to reading the job pages."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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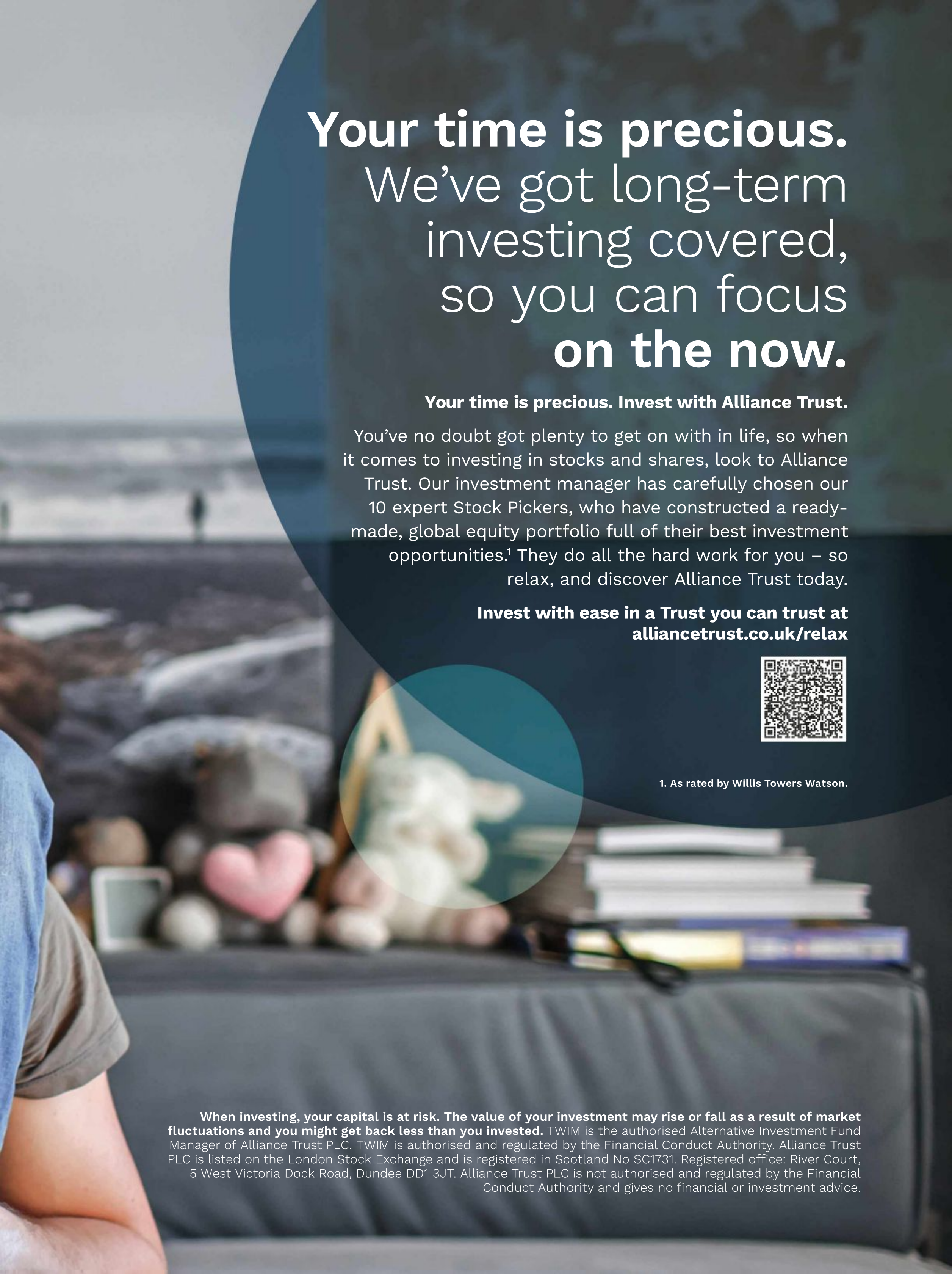

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GI Reader TOUR

Chédigny.

Michael Marriott worked at David Austin Roses, designing and advising, for more than 30 years. He is an expert on all matters relating to roses, from the extensive range of cultivars and types to successful growing.

Château de Villandry.

The French Rose Garden

Join us for a five-day tour from Paris to the Loire in the company of rosarian Michael Marriott to celebrate the French rose

For 2022, our popular rose tour travels over the Channel to investigate the story of the French rose and enjoy some truly wonderful gardens and rose collections. Starting with a visit with the curator of **Roseraie du Val-de-Marne** in L'Haÿ-les-Roses, you'll come to understand more about the vast array of French roses and the development of the roses we grow in our gardens today. We will also visit collections of wild roses; a specialist rose nursery producing beautiful new roses each year; a village overflowing with roses; a fairy-tale château where the discerning owner has surrounded her home with sumptuous roses; as well as some intimate private gardens where roses steal the show. This is an unmissable opportunity to stroll from rose to rose discussing the merits of under-planting, mulching, pruning, budding, training, and even 'the name of the rose' in the company of a great rose enthusiast and expert. We will stay one night at **Hôtel Les Pléiades**, in the village of Barbizon, before travelling down to the Loire to **Hôtel Le Choiseul** in Amboise. Both hotels offer good food, local wines and convivial Gallic hospitality.

30 MAY – 3 JUNE 2022

EVENT DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing, is £3,280 (a single supplement of £250 is levied by the hotels).

The price includes: one night with dinner at Hôtel Les Pléiades, Barbizon, and three nights at Hôtel Le Choiseul, Amboise, bed & breakfast and dinner with wine included; five lunches; return tickets on Eurostar and all transport during the tour. If you wish to travel independently to join the tour at Paris, Gare du Nord, please deduct £80 and contact the office to discuss joining arrangements. The price does not include extras or travel insurance.

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JULIAN ELLIOTT; RHETORICAL ANSWER / BOTH ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

GI Reader TOUR

Kenroku-en Garden, Kanazawa.

Hannah Gardner is a Kew-trained horticulturist who works as a head gardener and garden consultant, with a particular passion for studying plant communities around the world, including in Japan.

Tokachi Millennium Forest, Hokkaido.

Japan's Hidden Garden Gems

Travel with Japanese garden expert Hannah Gardner on this far-reaching, two-week tour and discover some of Japan's most compelling gardens

The tour starts with a visit to the contemporary gardens of **Tokachi Millennium Forest**, designed by Dan Pearson and situated on Japan's most northerly island, Hokkaido. We'll learn about the spirit of nature and sense of place from head gardener Midori Shintani, as well as enjoying a cultural workshop and foraged lunch prepared by the gardeners. We'll also study the stunning autumn flora of the nearby mountains. Then we transfer to Honshu, Japan's mainland, to delve into the traditional gardens, culture and the unforgettable architecture of Tokyo, Kanazawa, Kyoto and Nara. We'll meet with the gardeners of the **Chion-in Temple** who will demonstrate the fine art of *niwaki* pruning and offer advice on the tools they use. We'll also discover both renowned gardens and lesser-known, hidden cultural gems, such as the beautifully preserved, historic **Sumiya Pleasure House** in Kyoto. These varied landscapes combine the intimate essence of nature with the disciplines of cosmology, poetry and meditation, and through Hannah's formal and informal instruction, we will come to understand the history and meaning of these serene and spiritual landscapes.

15-29 SEPTEMBER 2022

EVENT DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing, is £6,280 (a single supplement of £1,140 is levied by the hotels).

Price is based on all hotels, trains, other transportation, most meals and all sightseeing. It does not include hotel extras or travel insurance, or international flights, although these can be arranged through Distant Horizons if required. For more details and for an in-depth itinerary with details of day-to-day visits, meals, and so on, please contact Distant Horizons.

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Here are just some of our world class contributors:
Piet Oudolf, Dan Pearson, Jacqueline van der Kloet, Prof James Hitchmough, Caroline Jackson, Tom Stuart-Smith, Rosy Hardy, Midori Shintani, Panayoti Kelaides, Jason Ingram, Brigitte Girling, Miguel Urquijo, Lisa Roper, Neil Lucas, Sarah Price, Pradip Krishen, Prof Nigel Dunnett and many, many more…

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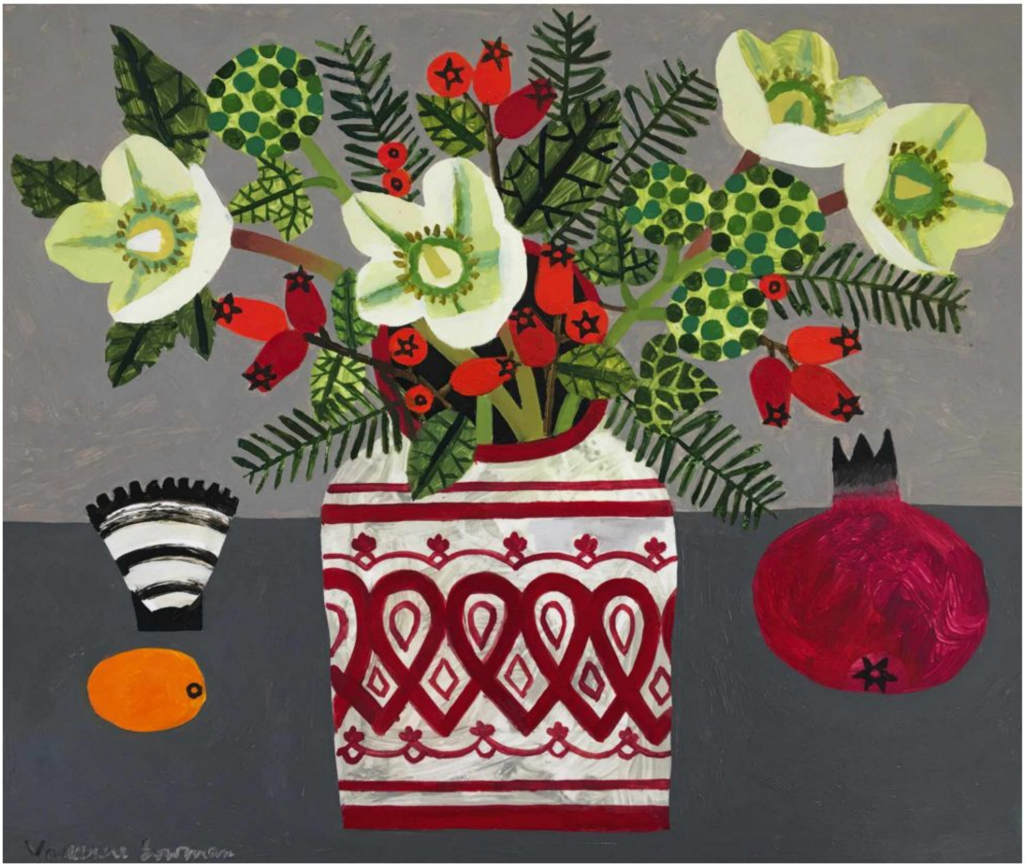
DIG IN

What's new, what's growing and what's going on this month



VANESSA BOWMAN

Merry and bright

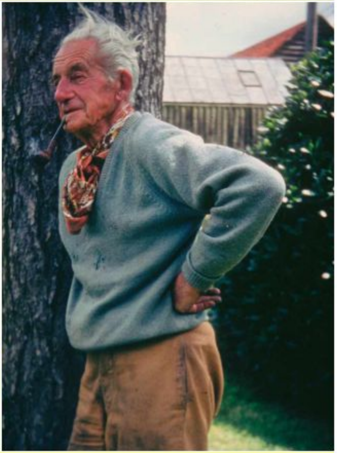
Artist Vanessa Bowman has an eye for the simple joys of everyday life and a knack for turning these into joyful art. Her landscapes and still lifes capture the patterns and textures of the countryside and the beauty of the rich flora and fauna, surrounding her Dorset home. Whether she's depicting a vase of vibrant hips and hellebores (shown above) or holly pickers gathering greenery in the December snow, her richly detailed works capture a moment in time brought to life with jewel-like effect. This year she is reproducing ten of her paintings depicting festive scenes of the countryside – owls and foxes in snowy fields, carol singers outside a country church – and still lifes for a series of very lovely Christmas cards, and is also offering one of the images, a wintry scene of a barn owl called *Christmas Morning*, as an A3 print. Cards are priced at £10 for a pack of eight, and the A3 print costs £65. All are available from her website. **vanessabowman.co.uk**

News

COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE
AND ALYS HURN

Carbon capture

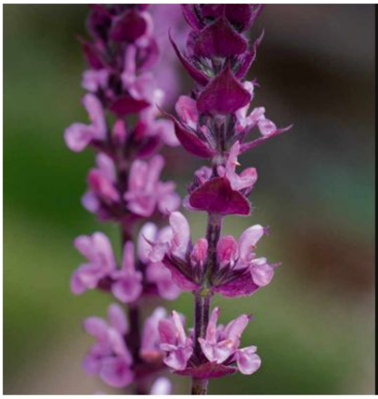
Biochar – a horticultural charcoal made in higher temperatures than regular charcoal – has long-term benefits for soil health and plant growth when added to your compost. Not only is its porous structure excellent at retaining water and nutrients, but it is also an effective way of storing carbon. Alongside selling packs of garden-ready biochar, new company Earthly Biochar is so keen to spread the word on biochar's benefits that it is also selling a smokeless Biochar Kiln, which lets you make your own safely at home. Its innovative design ensures that wood smoke is directed to a combustion zone, leaving you with biochar that is almost pure carbon. Every burn in the 25-litre chamber produces ten litres of biochar within one hour. Handmade in Wales, the kiln costs £797 from ***earthlybiochar.com***



LUCY SKELHORN; CEDRIC MORRIS COURTESY OF SARAH COOK

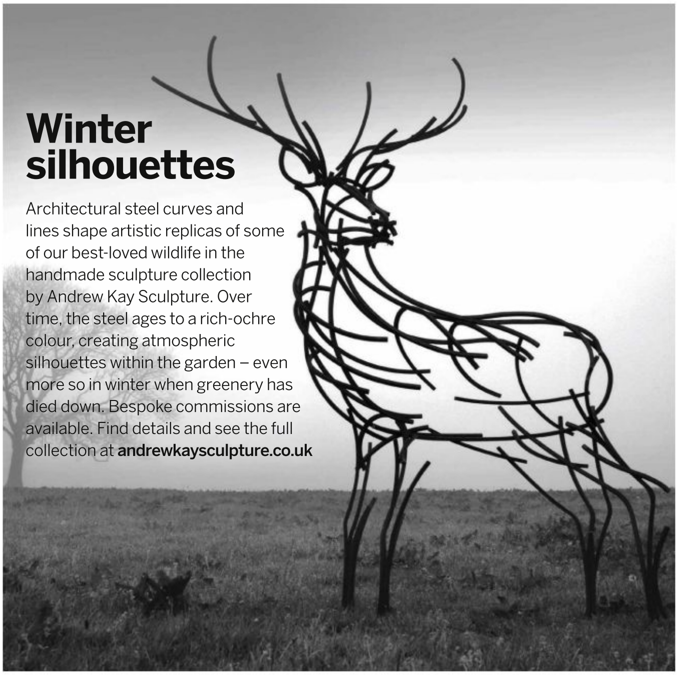
New chapter

Benton End, the former Suffolk home of the artist, gardener and iris breeder Cedric Morris (above), is to be restored as a new centre of gardening, art and creativity by the Garden Museum and Pinchbeck Charitable Trust. For many years from the 1940s, the manor house was both home to Morris and his partner, the artist Arthur Lett-Haines, and to the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing that the pair established as a sanctuary for a diverse range of influential artists and writers. The revived Benton End will similarly aim to support and inspire artists and gardeners in the spirit of Morris and Lett-Haines, and work on the garden will begin in 2022. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**



PRETTY IN PINK

Shortlisted for Plant of the Year at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, *Salvia nemorosa* Caradonna Pink Inspiration (='Tuitsalv') is an interesting pink form of the ever-popular *S. nemorosa* 'Caradonna'. Promising to be as versatile as its best-selling cousin, it flowers repeatedly throughout the summer and the dark-pink flowers contrast dramatically with its towering, deep-purple stems. Very effective when planted in groups, it's loved by pollinating insects and enjoys a sunny position. Available from Suttons, with prices starting at £11.99 for a 9cm pot. **suttons.co.uk**



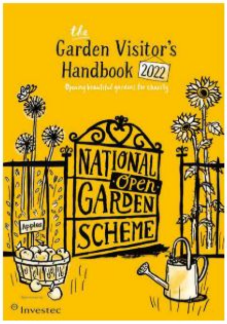
Winter silhouettes

Architectural steel curves and lines shape artistic replicas of some of our best-loved wildlife in the handmade sculpture collection by Andrew Kay Sculpture. Over time, the steel ages to a rich-ochre colour, creating atmospheric silhouettes within the garden – even more so in winter when greenery has died down. Bespoke commissions are available. Find details and see the full collection at **andrewkaysculpture.co.uk**

RHS

EARLY BIRDS

After a long break, it was great to see the Royal Horticultural Society garden shows return this year. Tickets are already on sale for next year's shows, including the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, which is back in its May slot with a new sponsor – The Newt in Somerset – for 2022. Book now at **rhs.org.uk**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Out and about

If you're thinking about refreshing your garden next year, then the chance to take a peek around some of the inspirational gardens that open for the National Garden Scheme is a great source of ideas – and proceeds from garden visits help support nursing and health charities. The 2022 edition of the NGS Garden Visitor's Handbook is out now, with more than 3,500 gardens listed county by county, including many private gardens not usually open to the public. It costs £14.99, but Gardens Illustrated *readers can order a copy for £11.99 by entering the code GI22 at* **ngs.org.uk**

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HANDY GARDEN TOOL
Burgon & Ball One-Hand Hatchet
£21, Farrar & Tanner,
0344 567 8365, farrar-tanner.co.uk

JAPANESE MADE
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£159, Niwaki,
01747 445059, niwaki.com

IMAGE CARL BOVIS

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❷ RHS Bridgewater Welcome Tours
Get to know the RHS's newest garden in the quieter months of the year on one of the daily guided tours. Tours will explore the walled gardens, including the Paradise Garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith (shown) and the Kitchen Garden designed by Harris Bugg Studio. Until 23 December, 10.30am. Free with garden admission; pre-booking essential. RHS Garden Bridgewater, Salford, Greater Manchester M28 2LJ. Tel 0161 503 6100, rhs.org.uk

❸ Waddesdon Christmas Light Trail
Soak up the festive atmosphere and delight in the winter illuminations and light trail at Waddesdon Manor and gardens. Open on various dates and times until 3 January 2022. From £7.50; pre-booking essential. Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH. Tel 01296 820414, waddesdon.org.uk

❹ *Cryptic Landscape* by Sarah Rhys
Learn more about the miniature and mysterious botanical worlds of lichen and moss in this exhibition of artworks, including small porcelain slip casts, from artist Sarah Rhys who has been observing and collecting lichen and moss specimens from the Tywi valley area. Until 31 January 2022, 10am-4pm. Admission included in gardens entry. Apothecary, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Middleton Hall, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HN. Tel 01558 667149, botanicgarden.wales

❺ Sheffield School Approach to Sustainable Planting
Join Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough from the Sheffield School of Landscape Architecture on this online talk for the National Garden Scheme that will focus on a selection of their projects, bringing to life the plants and landscapes, and championing a more sustainable approach to gardening today. 7 December, 7pm. £10. ngs.org.uk

❻ Garden Talk: Heritage and Heirloom Plants
Learn more about the cultural and historic significance of heritage or heirloom varieties of edible plants in this free talk with John Hancox, advocate for heritage apples; John Marshall, retired potato trader and expert; and Andrew Skea of Potato House, supplier of heritage, organic potatoes. 11 December, 2-3pm. Admission included in garden entry. Hospitalfield House, Arbroath, Angus DD11 2NH. Tel 01241 656124, hospitalfield.org.uk

❼ Christmas Wreath Making
Learn how to make your own Christmas wreath using traditional greenery, dried and foraged materials, and even the odd feather or two, on this half-day course with the Crafty Gardeners. 13 December, 12.30-3pm. £85, includes all materials and equipment. Ashton Court, Long Ashton, Bristol BS41 9JN. thecraftygardeners.co.uk

❽ Christmas Market at Levens Hall
Enjoy a glimpse of the famous Topiary Garden beautifully lit after dark, and browse Christmas gifts from local suppliers. With live music and food from the Levens Hall kitchens. 16-20 December, 4-8pm. £10; pre-booking essential. Levens Hall, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 0PD. Tel 01539 560321, levenshall.co.uk

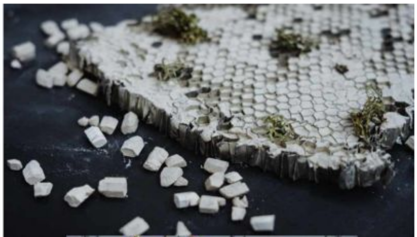
❾ Essential Garden Design Diploma
Book now to secure your place on the Essential Garden Design Diploma at the English Gardening School. Aimed at skilled gardeners planning to become professional garden designers, this three-month, part-time course is taught at London's Chelsea Physic Garden and offers an overview of all aspects of garden design. January to March, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10.30am-3.15pm. £6,495. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS. Tel 020 7352 4347, englishgardeningschool.co.uk

All information is correct at time of going to press, but may be subject to change.
Tickets for most events will be limited to ensure social distancing and must be booked in advance.
Please be sure to check all opening times and advice on any local travel restrictions before travelling.

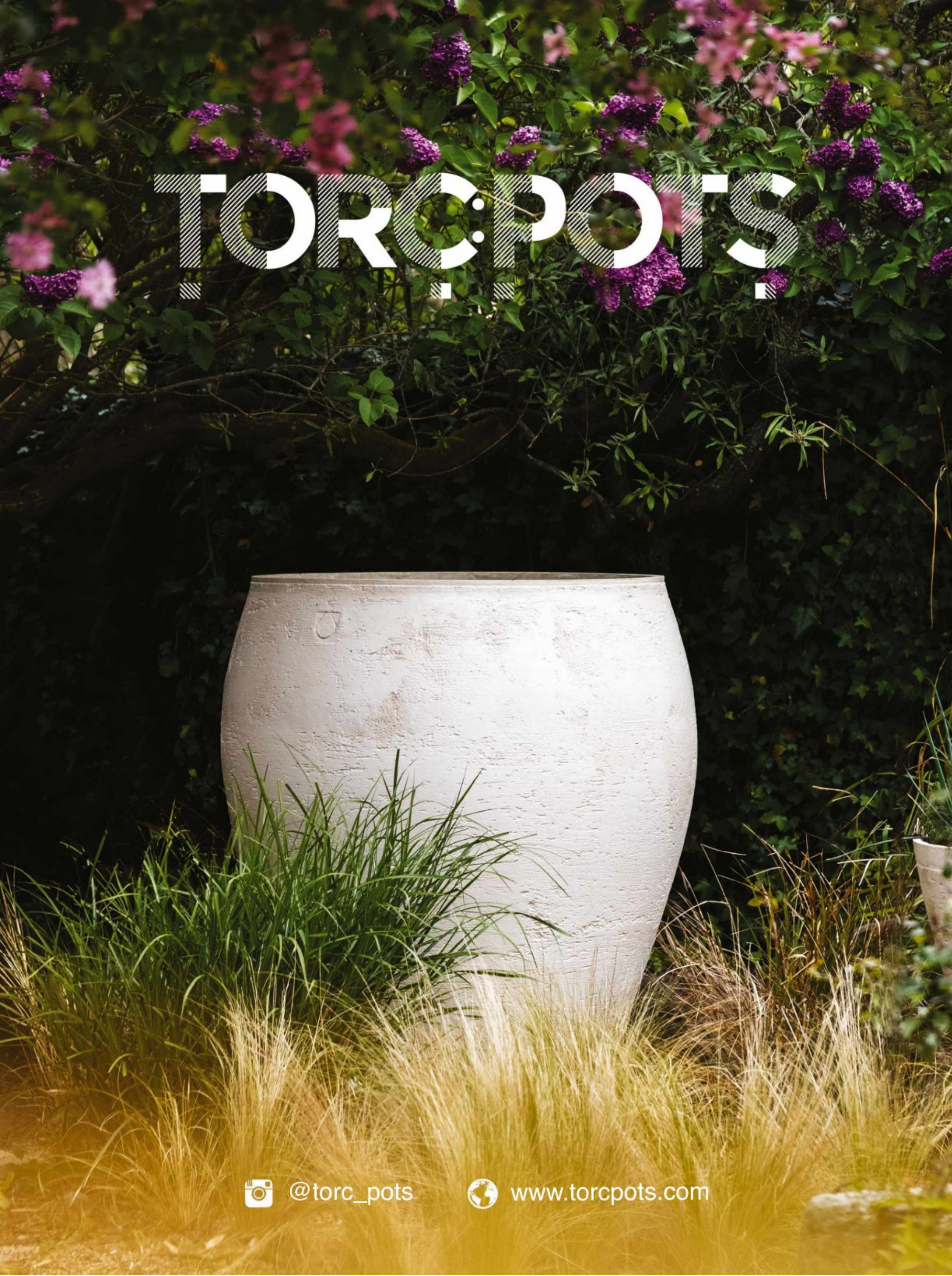
WITH THANKS TO ANNIE GATTI AND ALYS HURN

KESTREL CAM

DEREK PELLING, NATIONAL TRUST WADDESDON



REBECCA GOLDMAN



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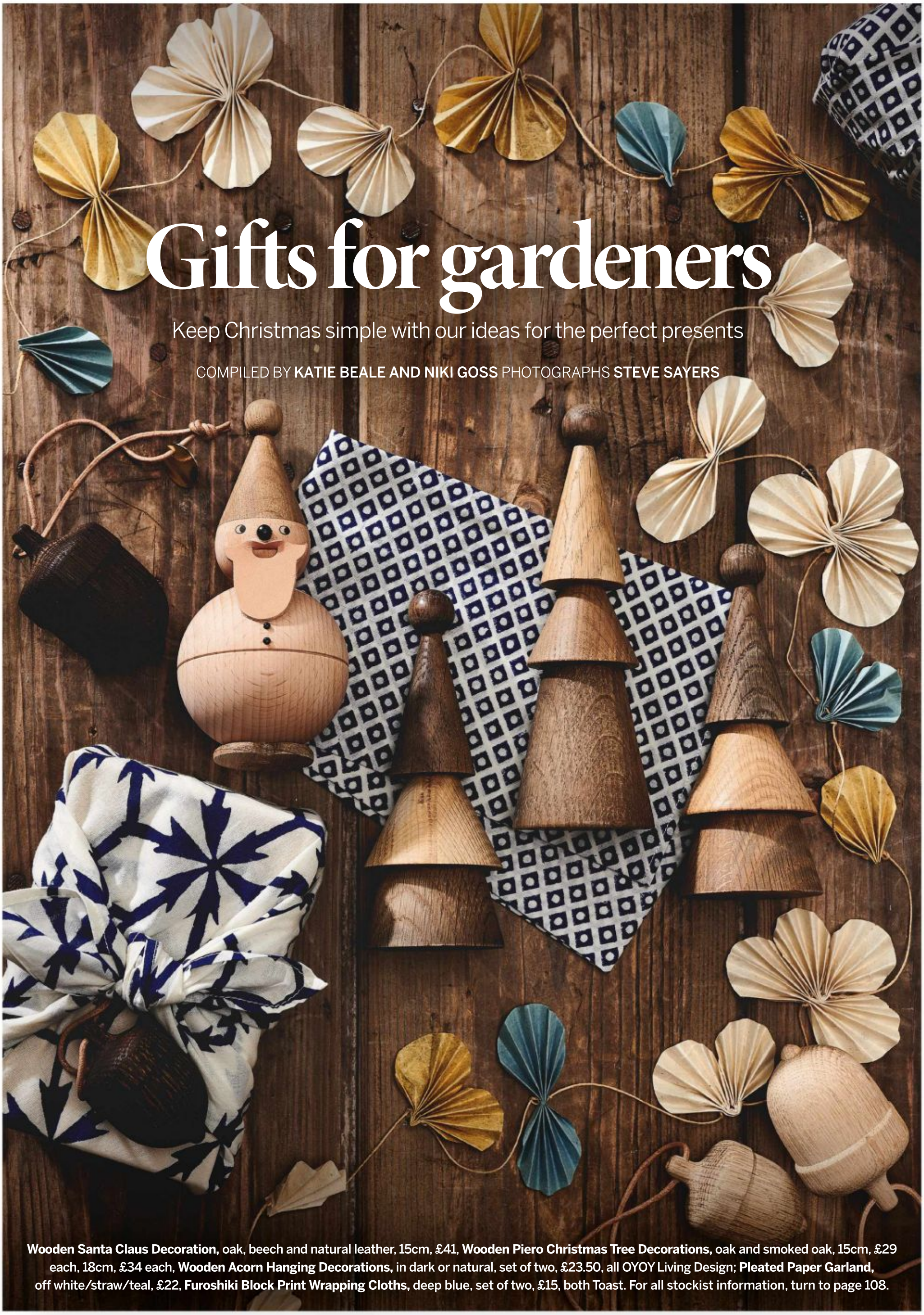
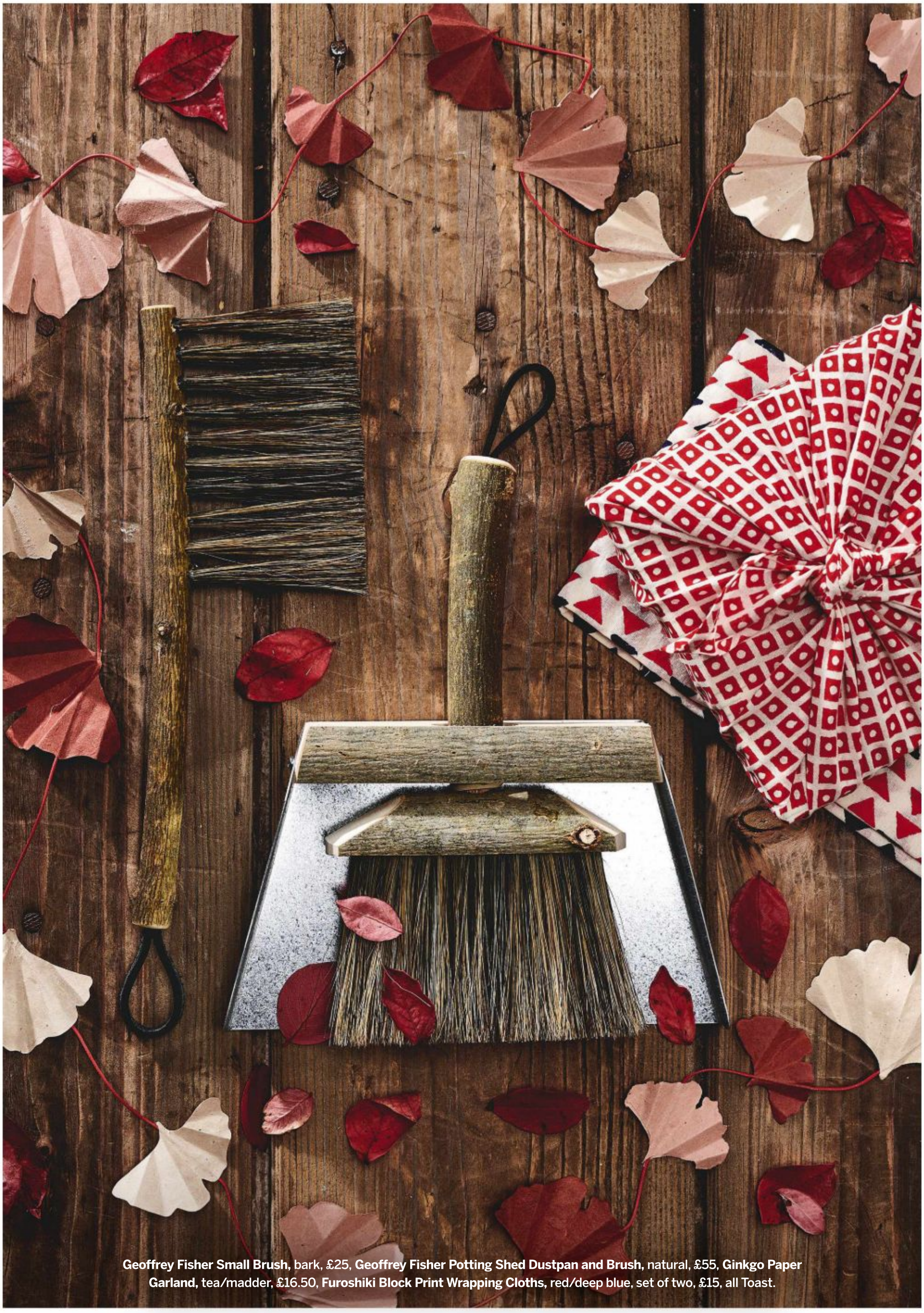
COMPILED BY **KATIE BEALE AND NIKI GOSS** PHOTOGRAPHS **STEVE SAYERS**



Wooden Santa Claus Decoration, oak, beech and natural leather, 15cm, £41, **Wooden Piero Christmas Tree Decorations,** oak and smoked oak, 15cm, £29 each, 18cm, £34 each, **Wooden Acorn Hanging Decorations,** in dark or natural, set of two, £23.50, all OYOY Living Design; **Pleated Paper Garland,** off white/straw/teal, £22, **Furoshiki Block Print Wrapping Cloths,** deep blue, set of two, £15, both Toast. For all stockist information, turn to page 108.



Geoffrey Fisher Small Brush, bark, £25, **Geoffrey Fisher Potting Shed Dustpan and Brush,** natural, £55, **Ginkgo Paper Garland,** tea/madder, £16.50, **Furoshiki Block Print Wrapping Cloths,** red/deep blue, set of two, £15, all Toast.

Top row (left to right) Rusted Steel Mini Fern Stakes, approx 60-70cm, £15 each, Mr Fox's Garden; **Urban Terrarium,** 26cm (W) x 26cm (L) x 48cm (H), £159, Nordic House; **Jack The Boot Jack,** oak, £24, Poddy & Black. **Middle row (left to right) Bees Ankle Wellies,** £49.50, Sophie Allport; **Mark II Wooden Sunglasses,** walnut, £90, SixtySix; **Rattan Hanging Egg Chair,** £339.99, VonHaus. **Bottom row (left to right) Coffee Compost Dyed Cotton Twill Convertible Apron,** $98, Gardenheir; **Fallen Fruits Oak Wood Domed Bird Table,** natural/black, £189.99, John Lewis; **Kamado Ceramic Grill Barbecue,** jet black, 22 inch (55cm), £999.99, Gardenesque.

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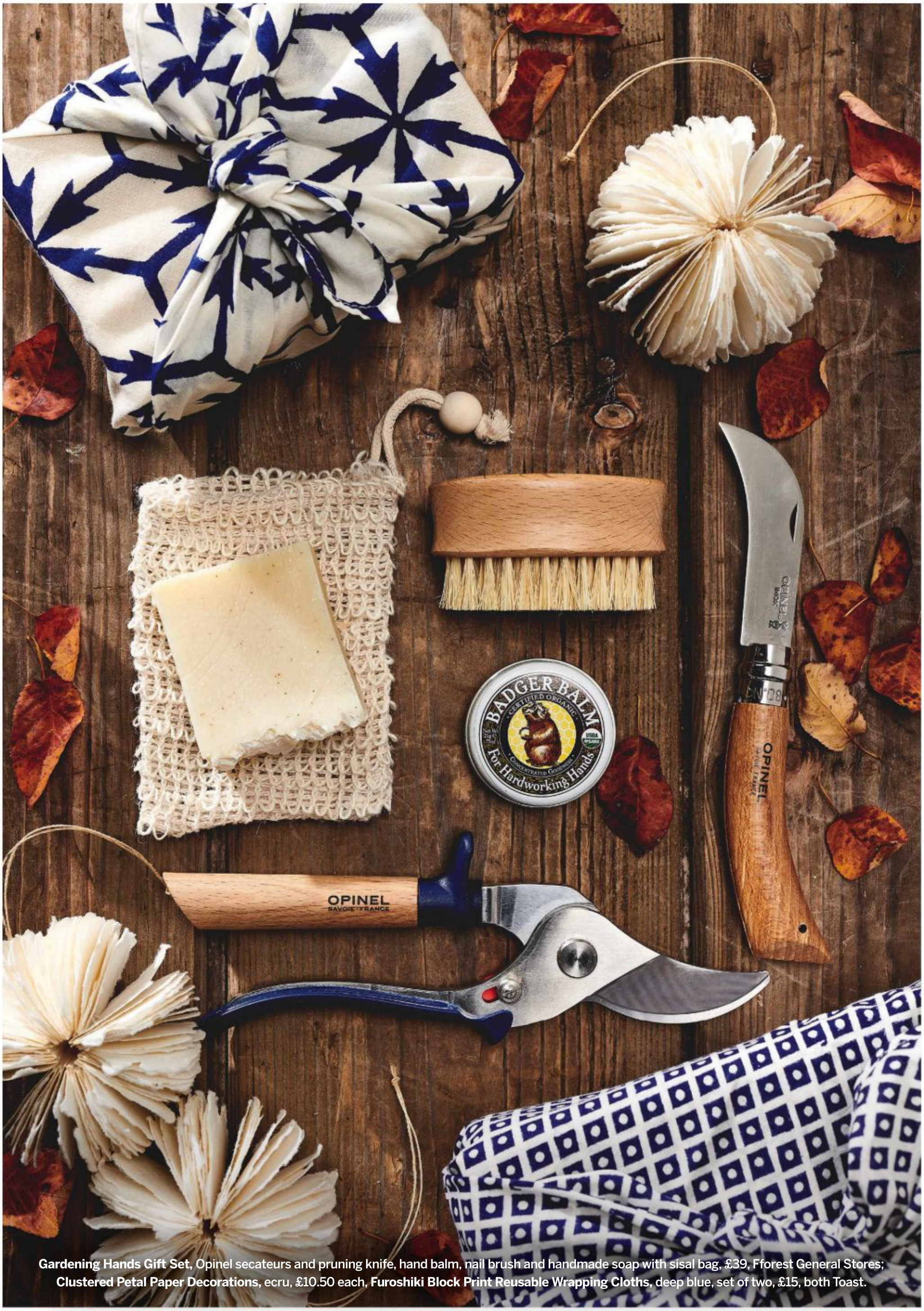
Top row (left to right) Loot and Boot Bag, navy, waterproof canvas, £65, Carrier Company; **Burgon & Ball Gardening Gloves,** tweed, £18, Farrar & Tanner; **Ikebana Vase,** large, £167, Nordic Nest. **Middle row (left to right) Cyanotypes 01 Postcard Set,** set of 10, £18, JamJar Edit; **Gold Coloured Trowel and Fork Gift Set,** £14, Rockett St George; **Grapefruit & Ginger Hand Scrub,** £16, Tam Mason. **Bottom row (left to right) The Gardeners Herb Candle,** 200g, £25, **The Gardeners Spiced Honey Bath Syrup,** 350ml, £31.50, **The Gardeners Harvest Hand Cream,** 250ml, £31.50, **The Gardeners Sunbeam Glow Drops,** 15ml, £32, all Crabtree & Evelyn; **Chelsea Chop short boots,** north sea blue, £80, Poddy & Black; **Fern Fronds Cushion,** deep blue, £30, The Cotswold Company.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HORATIO'S GARDEN

WATER
TEGERA

Top row (left to right) Niwaki Rubber Boots, steel toe cap, £119, Niwaki; **Four Floor Wooden Insect House with Metal Roof,** £32.99, Gardenesque; **Hydrangea Leaf Plates,** set of six, £105, Sophie Conran. **Middle row (left to right) Nigella Paperweight,** from £30, JamJar Edit; **Gardener's Hand & Body Cream,** 100ml, £12, 200ml, £20, 15ml pot, £3, Horatio's Garden; **Black Iron Watering Can,** £37, Toast. **Bottom row (left to right) Waterproof Gardening Gloves,** £18, Genus; **Victorian Garden Cloche,** £395, Claverton Cloches; **Petersham Nurseries Giardino Candle,** £60, Petersham Nurseries. For all stockist information, turn to page 108.

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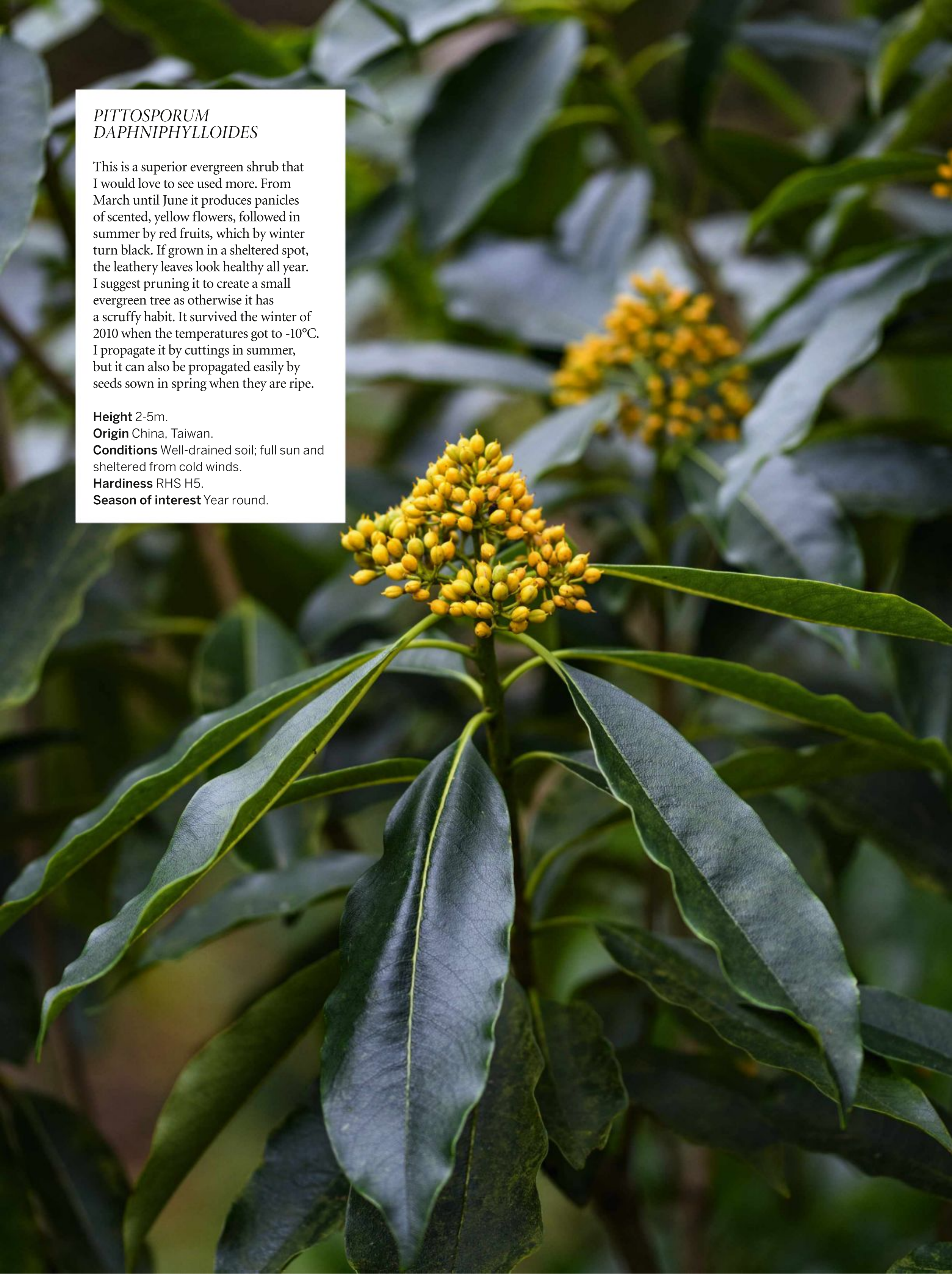

PITTOSPORUM DAPHNIPHYLLOIDES

This is a superior evergreen shrub that I would love to see used more. From March until June it produces panicles of scented, yellow flowers, followed in summer by red fruits, which by winter turn black. If grown in a sheltered spot, the leathery leaves look healthy all year. I suggest pruning it to create a small evergreen tree as otherwise it has a scruffy habit. It survived the winter of 2010 when the temperatures got to -10°C. I propagate it by cuttings in summer, but it can also be propagated easily by seeds sown in spring when they are ripe.

Height 2-5m.
Origin China, Taiwan.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun and sheltered from cold winds.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Year round.

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Jimi Blake is the owner and creator of Hunting Brook Gardens. **huntingbrook.com**

December plants

For his final selection, Jimi finds room for exotic-looking foliage as well as evergreen interest and flowers, and reveals where he sources the plants that make up his signature style

WORDS JIMI BLAKE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

PTERIS WALLICHIANA

I got this tall fern from Billy Alexander in Kells Bay Gardens in Co Kerry, Ireland, a few years ago. If you love ferns then you must visit as it's one of the best fern gardens in the world. This *Pteris* has been extremely slow to bulk up with me but seems happy growing near the stream in the valley. It spreads by rhizomes in dappled shade and its dramatic, tropical-looking fronds unfurl on 1.8m-tall stems. This is one of the most beautiful ferns in my collection and one- that should be grown more in gardens. I have propagated it by divisions but it's very slow to increase in size.

Height 1.8-2m.
Origin China, Taiwan, Japan.
Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.

DAPHNE BHOLUA 'GARDEN HOUSE GHOST'

I am very slowly building up a collection of daphnes to give a lift to the garden at this dull time of year. This one was raised at the Garden House in Devon, and has pure-white flowers in December and January, with the most gorgeous scent. I have it planted at the edge of the path that I walk by every day so I can stick my nose into its delicious aroma on freezing cold mornings. I find that the leaves can be damaged by cold, east winds, so I planted it in a sheltered location. Daphnes resent root disturbance so plant them where they are going to stay.

Height 2m.
Origin Garden (species Himalayas).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest January to February.

PITAVIA PUNCTATA

I bought this tree from Jan Ravensberg who has a wonderful wholesale nursery in Ireland. Jan is a master propagator and so much of the woody plant collection in Hunting Brook has come from him over the years. *Pitavia punctata* won't take the world by storm with its floral exuberance but it's a very handsome, upright-growing, evergreen shrub. It has bunches of small, white flowers in early summer, followed by yellow-green fruit. No matter what weather was thrown at it over the past ten years it always managed to look perfectly healthy. Propagation is easy by cuttings and seed.

Height 15m.
Origin Chile.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun or semi shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Year round.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.

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SCHEFFLERA SHWELIENSIS

I bought this selection (NJM13.130) from Pan-Global Plants a few years ago and have only just planted it in its final position. For the first few years I overwinter my scheffleras in the glasshouse from October. Then once the wood has thickened up and hardened, they are planted out in the valley in their final position. This one is similar to *Schefflera taiwaniana* but with shiny leaves that tend to droop downwards. My scheffleras tend to flower late in the season, which doesn't give their seed long enough to ripen, so I've had much better success propagating scheffleras from cuttings taken into pure sand in summer.

Height 20m.
Origin China, India, Myanmar.
Conditions Sheltered position.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.

BETULA UTILIS 'NEPALESE ORANGE'

Kenneth Ashburner collected seed from *Betula utilis* in east Nepal in 1971 and this was a selection from the seedlings raised. My tree is young, but the peeling bark is starting to colour up and looks incredible when backlit by the setting sun. The bark is a bronze-orange colour with prominent lenticels horizontally across the bark. It has yellow catkins in spring and good, yellow, autumn colour on the leaves. This is one of several exciting *B. utilis* cultivars, including 'Darkness' and 'Buddha', all of which should be pruned from late summer to mid-winter, as at other times of year the wounds will bleed.

Height 7m.
Origin Garden (species Nepal).
Conditions Well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Year round.

MAHONIA DUCLOUXIANA

I will always remember the first time I saw this incredible *Mahonia* in full flower along the driveway up to Dan Hinkley's home at Windcliff in the USA. I knew then that I had to source my own. I finally got my hands on it two years ago and it hasn't let me down, flowering profusely as a young plant. The yellow-orange panicle flowers appear during winter and spring, adding a pop of colour in snowdrop season. The flowers are followed by bunches of blue berries, which can be cleaned and sown when ripe. They generally germinate the following spring after the cold of the winter.

Height 3m.
Origin China, India, Myanmar.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to semi shade. Shelter from cold winds.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.

Where to buy

If a plant from Jimi's unusual selections this year has caught your eye, here are some of the nurseries from which he has sourced his own plants. All offer mail order.

A few years ago my sister June and I had the pleasure of visiting the nursery **Far Reaches Farm** in Washington State, USA, while we were lecturing in that part of the world. It's run by Sue Milliken and Kelly Dodson, who through their Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy are dedicated to conserving rare and endangered plants. I will never forget walking through the shade tunnels, which were packed to the rafters with choice woodlanders, such as the largest, most spectacular podopyllums I have ever seen. Far Reaches Farm, 1818 Hastings Avenue, Port Townsend, WA 98368, USA. Tel +1 360 385-5114, farreachesfarm.com

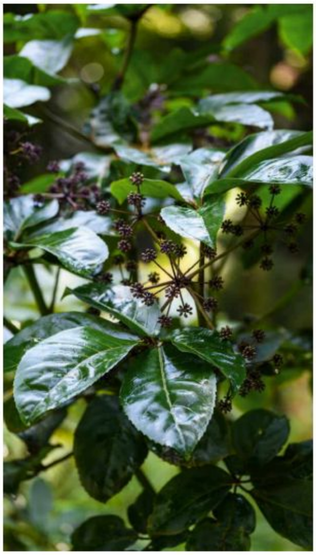
Rare Plants Ireland nursery in Dublin is only just down the road from me and is packed with treasures from around the world. Owner Finlay Colley travels to nurseries outside of Ireland to source rare and unusual plants to sell. This nursery is a hidden gem off the busy Naas Road on the edge of Dublin city. Finlay also sells at plant fairs around Ireland and will send plants by mail order, too. The Walled Nursery, Green Isle Road, Corkagh, Kilmatead, Co Dublin D22 T667. Tel +353 (0)87 247 3549, rareplantsireland.ie

I am always asked where I source the rare plants at Hunting Brook, and I have to say a large proportion are from Sue and Bleddyn Wynn-Jones at **Crûg Farm Plants** in Wales. Sue and Bleddyn have spent years travelling to all corners of the world on expeditions collecting plants. Many ▷

CHUSQUEA VALDIVIENSIS

I have spent the past few years building up a collection of interesting bamboos around the garden and in the valley. This one looks as though it's going to be enormous without running all over the place. It differs from other bamboos in that its canes become pendulous as they grow, creating a weeping effect. I noticed recently that it has also grown new canes from the nodes of existing ones, which I haven't seen before in any other bamboo. And unlike other bamboos, the stems on *Chusquea* species are solid, not hollow. I am experimenting by taking cuttings from the new growth this year.

Height 10m.
Origin Chile, Argentina.
Conditions Any soil; full sun to semi shade in a sheltered position.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Year round.



NEOPANAX LAETUS

This is an evergreen, New Zealand native, with spectacular, shiny, palmate leaves, which adds a tropical style to my planting when combined with scheffleras, large-leaf magnolias and rhododendrons. The flowers are similar looking to ivy and are excellent for pollinators. The female plants produce black berries after flowering that can be easily propagated from seed, but I mainly propagate from cuttings, which root easily if taken in summer. Mine is surprisingly hardy, only suffering badly once when temperatures fell to -10°C. Even then some plants that looked dead put on regrowth from the base. AGM*.

Height 4-5m.
Origin New Zealand.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to dappled shade. Shelter from cold winds.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Year round.

ARAUCARIA ANGUSTIFOLIA

I have fond memories as a child of pretending to be a monkey with the fallen spiky branches of *Araucaria araucana* attached to my belt as my tail. I am sure it was painful! This species is closely related to *Araucaria araucana* but with smaller and softer leaves. It is, though, critically endangered in the wild, as its timber is highly valued in the furniture industry, and also from deforestation as a result of agricultural use. I've read that it is slightly tender but I have had it planted out here in the valley at Hunting Brook for at least ten years with no damage during our coldest winters. It can be propagated by seed and also by grafting.

Height 12m.
Origin Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Year round.

▷ of the plants are new to cultivation and are starting to mature beautifully in the Valley at Hunting Brook. The bulk of my Araliaceae collection has come from Crûg Farm over the years. We owe so much to Sue and Bleddyn for their endless work in the conservation of endangered plants. Visits currently by appointment only. Griffith's Crossing, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1TU. Tel 01248 670232, crug-farm.co.uk

Nick Macer, the owner of **Pan-Global Plants**, has the keenest eye for choice plants and has built up one of the best nurseries in the world. For many years I made my annual trip to Pan-Global to buy his newest gems, and stuff them into a bag for the return flight to Ireland. A lot of my woody plant collections and choice perennials have come from Pan-Global. If you live in the UK and you are looking for something different, a trip to this nursery is a must. The Walled Garden, Frampton Court, Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire GL2 7EX. Tel 01452 741641, panglobalplants.com

Cotswold Garden Flowers has one of the most extensive collections of choice plants available in any nursery in the UK. I always used to love the day its catalogue arrived in the post and I would spend the evening marking all the plants I wanted. Now I just drool over the website, dreaming of the day when I will be able to buy plants from the UK again. The website has a fantastic free encyclopaedia that I frequently use to look up information on plants. The nursery offers mail order and attends many plant fairs, but I recommend visiting the nursery itself to see the well-labelled stock beds. Here you will see growing many of the plants that are available to buy in the nursery. Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ. Tel 01386 422829, cotswoldgardenflowers.co.uk

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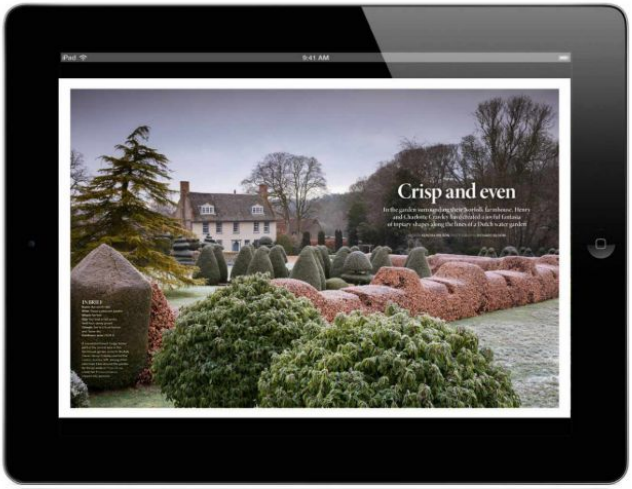
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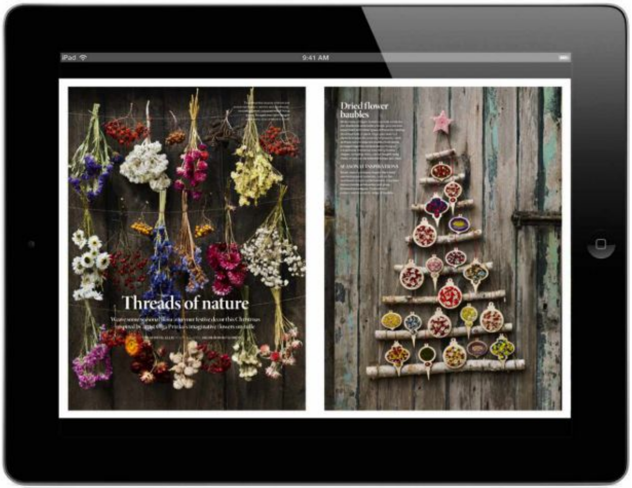
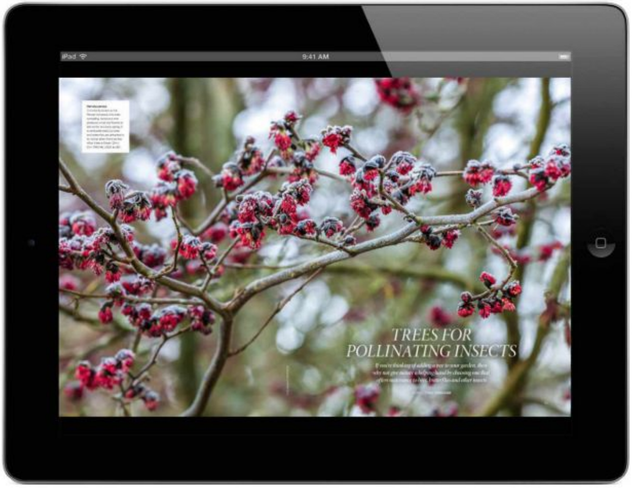

Threads of nature
Dried flower baubles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HEAVEN IN EARTH

Aaron is in two minds on the benefits of no-dig, but in no doubt that great plants really do start with great soil, and that now is the best time to give something back to the hard-working earth

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

To dig or not to dig? That is the great horticultural question of our time. I've considered both sides and, unusually for me, opted to sit on the fence. While I'm a passionate digger, what matters is that you're working to improve the soil and put something back in, not how you do it.

Regardless of whether you choose to wield the spade or not, you're going to need organic matter – and plenty of it. At Great Dixter we make our own compost from a mix of wildflower hay and annual garden weeds. Our heaps don't get hot enough to kill off the weeds so this compost should be dug in – otherwise the seeds will sit on the surface where they will get the light and moisture they need to germinate. If you don't have access to significant quantities of your own compost, leaf mould, green waste and spent mushroom compost will all do very well. Well-rotted manure is excellent too, but you must make sure it has been stored under cover so it's not full of weed seeds. Whatever you are using, be generous. You will start to see results within a couple of years.

What to sow

Seed sowing in December may sound unlikely, but a combination of milder winters and the increased availability of seeds specifically developed to germinate in cooler temperatures makes it a distinct possibility. Winter lettuce, salad mixes and mustard leaves can all be grown in pots or cold frames – this doesn't have to be anything fancy, just a wooden box or frame with a pane of glass on top. Ideally, have your pots or frames close to the house so that they can benefit from the shelter and additional warmth. Just remember to protect with fleece during cold spells and, equally important, to remove the covers when the weather is mild so air can circulate. It is so worth that extra effort to have some fresh greens at this time of year. The other thing you can sow this month is sweet peas. I know, they're not edible, but they are such a wonderfully colourful addition to the vegetable garden. I particularly love to see them scrambling up through climbing beans, and they attract pollinators too. My favourite is 'Matucana', an old-fashioned sweet pea whose dainty appearance belies its intense scent.

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What to plant out

The rhubarb patch at Great Dixter was planted in 1912 and it has remained in the same spot ever since. I know that some people lift their plants each year, improve the soil and replant, but this is the one part of the garden where we have been embracing a no-dig approach since long before that idea became fashionable. Rhubarb is an extremely hungry plant, so do add plenty of organic matter to the soil before planting. Once the crowns are in, fork in something like organic, pelleted sheep manure, and cover with a top layer of well-rotted manure. If space permits, it's a good idea to think about planting more than one rhubarb cultivar to extend the cropping season. Just bear in mind you will need to leave around 90cm between the plants and add a good mulch before the cold weather sets in. Two cultivars that I think are well worth growing are 'Timperley Early', which is great for forcing, and 'Champagne', which has good-sized stems that are full of flavour.

What to harvest

As a gardener who cooks, flavour is always at the top of my mind when deciding what to grow. For me, leeks are a kitchen essential. Mellower in flavour and more versatile than an onion, I love them simply steamed and dressed with butter or vinaigrette, in a tart or as a base for stews and soups, especially the hearty and comforting chick pea soup known as soup of Israel, which is one of my favourites. Those stringy little seedlings you planted out in the summer should have bulked up nicely by now and be ready for harvesting. At this time of year, it is worth pulling up a few at a time if you know you are going to be needing them in the kitchen, just in case the ground freezes and makes it difficult to get them out. I find the early cultivars, such as 'King Richard', can struggle a little in a harsh winter, so I try to use those first for an autumn harvest, and save the more flavoursome tough guys, such as 'Musselburgh', for when the temperatures really start to drop.

You can find Aaron's recipe for soup of Israel at **gardensillustrated.com/recipes**

Jobs for December

Soil improvement is the number one task this month. This is how I do it. First clear the soil, then spread a good 5cm layer of compost over the whole area. Dig a trench the depth and width of the blade of your spade, then dig a second trench next to it, this time transferring the clods into the first trench, flipping them over as you go so the compost is on the bottom. The worms will take the compost down into the soil, while the frost breaks up the clods on the surface.

If you have any energy left after the digging, give areas of long grass a final cut and rake, and rejoice in the fact you won't have to think about them again this winter. It will also leave the way clear for any naturalised spring bulbs to come through.

Keep an eye on any plants under glass, or that you have brought into the house to overwinter. Make sure they don't dry out and look out for signs of pests and disease. If the weather permits, put them outside for a dose of fresh air. This is something Christopher Lloyd always used to do, and I try to do the same. It does seem to help the plants to stay healthy and not grow too soft.

Each time you go out to harvest winter greens, check to see that the slugs and snails are not using them as a winter hotel. Regularly removing leaves will help, by ensuring that the plants don't become congested; you can always add another sprinkle of organic slug pellets.

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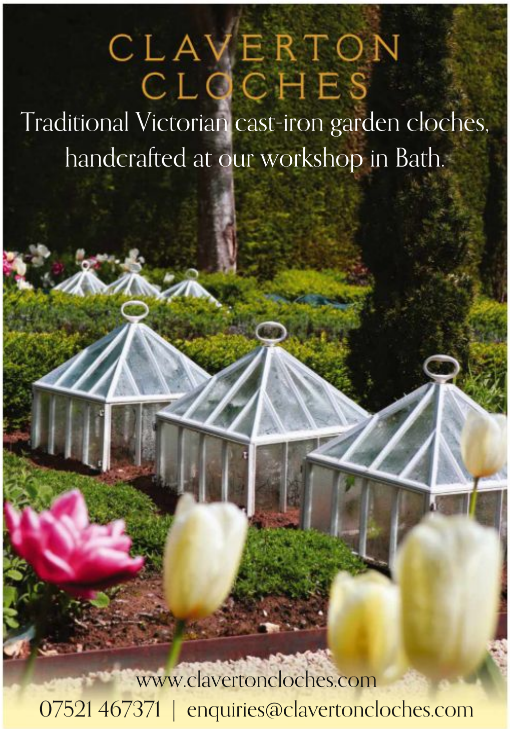

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GARDENING TALENT

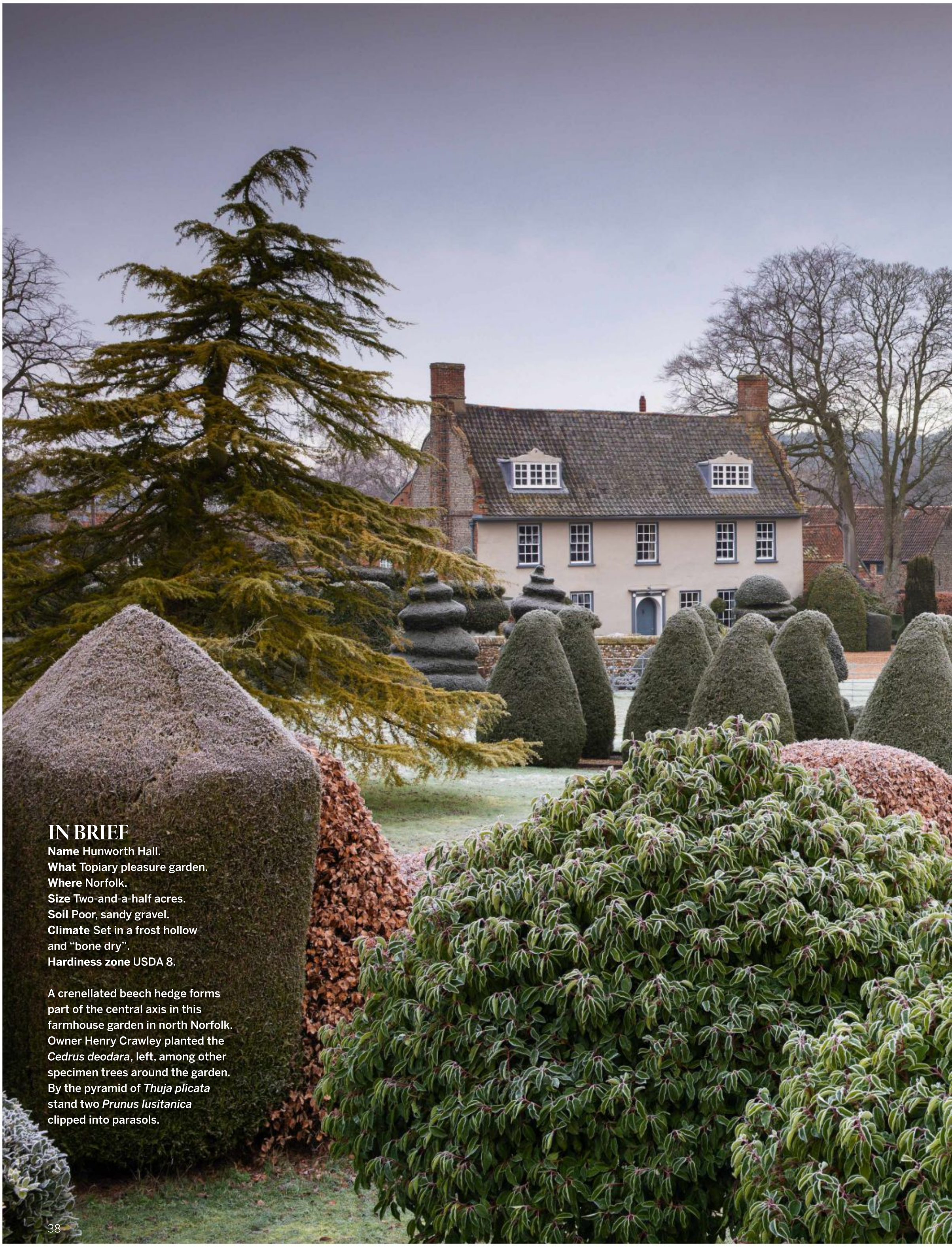
JOSH MARSHALL

As an apprentice gardener at Levens Hall in Cumbria, Josh is getting plenty of practice in clipping topiary

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love Growing pumpkins from seed and watching them grow as big as they will get. I still love doing it now. **Who has inspired your career the most?** My Nan; from an early age, I've always helped her in her garden. When I was very young she let me be hands on, from sowing seed and planting out to finally harvesting my produce. **Favourite landscape and garden** My Nan's seven-acre wildflower meadow on her organic farm. It has been carefully managed for the past 30 years. I love the colours, the textures and benefits to wildlife and nature. **Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener** No matter what type of soil you have, it always helps to add a load of muck. Don't fight nature when growing plants, let them do what they want to do. Go with the flow. And if, as I do, you live in the North West, always have a mattock to hand because there is a lot of stone that makes it difficult to dig holes. **Most valuable training** At Levens Hall I'm learning so much about pruning topiary, but also about propagation and how to care for bedding, herbaceous and shrub plants. **Favourite planting style** It has to be cottage garden because I think it looks so natural but so colourful. I really like to see things such as roses and vegetables merged together to make an ornamental and productive garden. **Favourite 'weed' you're happy to have in your garden** Honesty (*Lunaria annua*), which has lovely purple flowers in late spring. These then turn into silver, penny-like seedheads that give interest in winter. But it does seed everywhere. **Biggest challenge facing gardeners today** Climate change affects us massively at Levens Hall. We are on very low ground with a river next to the gardens. For the past few years we have noticed how regularly the garden is flooded. **One easy thing that every gardener can do to be more sustainable in their gardening** Grow plants from seed and cuttings, and share plants with your neighbours and friends. **What's the next big project you'll be tackling in the garden** Levens Hall is famous for its topiary – some pieces are over 300 years old. We start clipping around September in the hope of finishing by March. We clip box and yew topiary pieces and also a very tall beech hedge. **Do you have a particular aim in your gardening career that you'd really like to achieve** I would love to breed a new variety of pumpkin that would ripen well in the cold, dull northern climate and taste good. **Garden opening** See levenshall.co.uk for details. **Instagram** @Josh.marshall24

No matter what type of soil you have, it always helps to add a load of muck



IN BRIEF

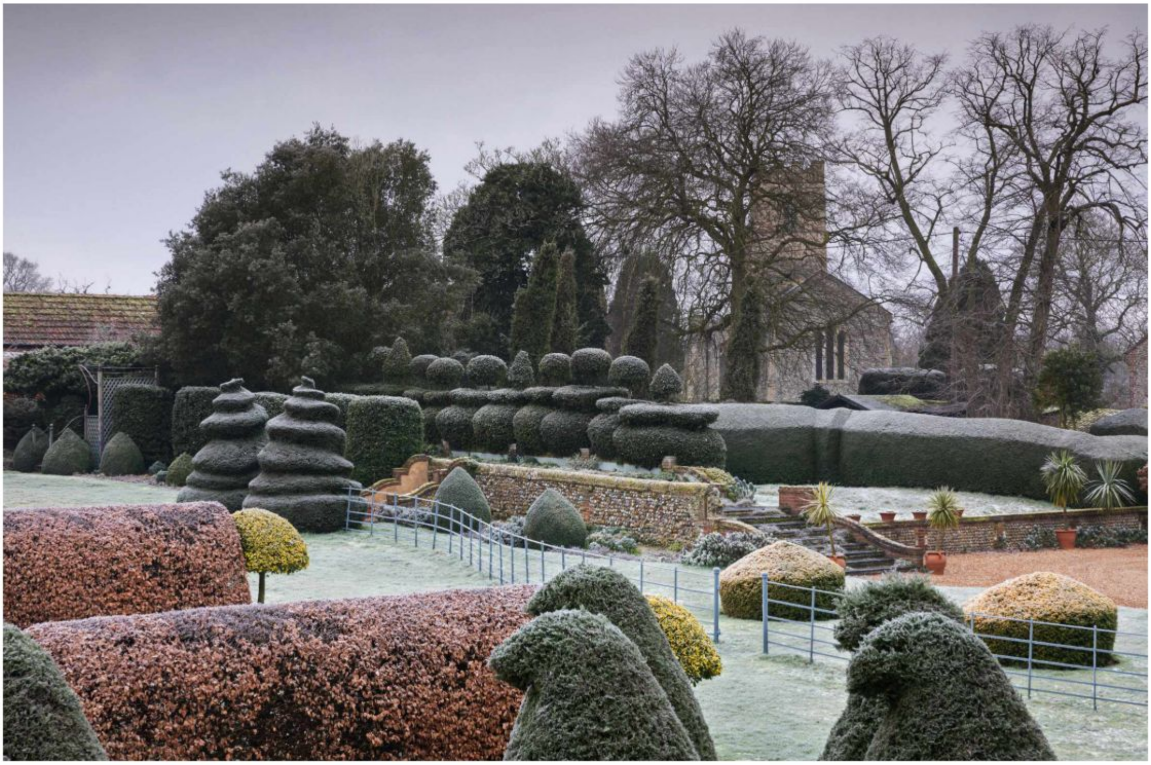
Name Hunworth Hall.
What Topiary pleasure garden.
Where Norfolk.
Size Two-and-a-half acres.
Soil Poor, sandy gravel.
Climate Set in a frost hollow and "bone dry".
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

A crenellated beech hedge forms part of the central axis in this farmhouse garden in north Norfolk. Owner Henry Crawley planted the *Cedrus deodara*, left, among other specimen trees around the garden. By the pyramid of *Thuja plicata* stand two *Prunus lusitanica* clipped into parasols.

Crisp and even

In the garden surrounding their Norfolk farmhouse, Henry and Charlotte Crawley have created a joyful fantasia of topiary shapes along the lines of a Dutch water garden

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



Above The garden is partly divided by a raised walkway, increasing the opportunities for garden viewing. Newly revealed in winter, the church can be seen behind a line of holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) cut into pot shapes. Green hedging and spirals are made from common yew (*Taxus baccata*).

Facing page Two canals with fountains form the principal axis of the garden. They are laid end to end, one placed slightly lower to accommodate the falling ground. They are furnished with a pavilion at one end and this orangery at the other, backed by woodland.

The flatness of Norfolk has been overstated; the land undulates, as it leans out towards the low-lying country of the Netherlands. A Dutch influence is easily recognised around Norfolk with gable-ended buildings, redirected waterways, and the occasional Anglo-Dutch garden. A formal structure of topiary and green enclosures, strong central axes with canals, and raised vantage points is well-suited to this part of the county, where estates tend to be smaller and lacking in the grand vistas of, say, Sandringham or Houghton Hall to the west. In this region, near Holt, Dutch-style gardens were once more prevalent around the homes of gentleman farmers, and at Hunworth Hall – where owner Henry Crawley, a retired doctor, does all the clipping himself – there is proof that the look is still viable.

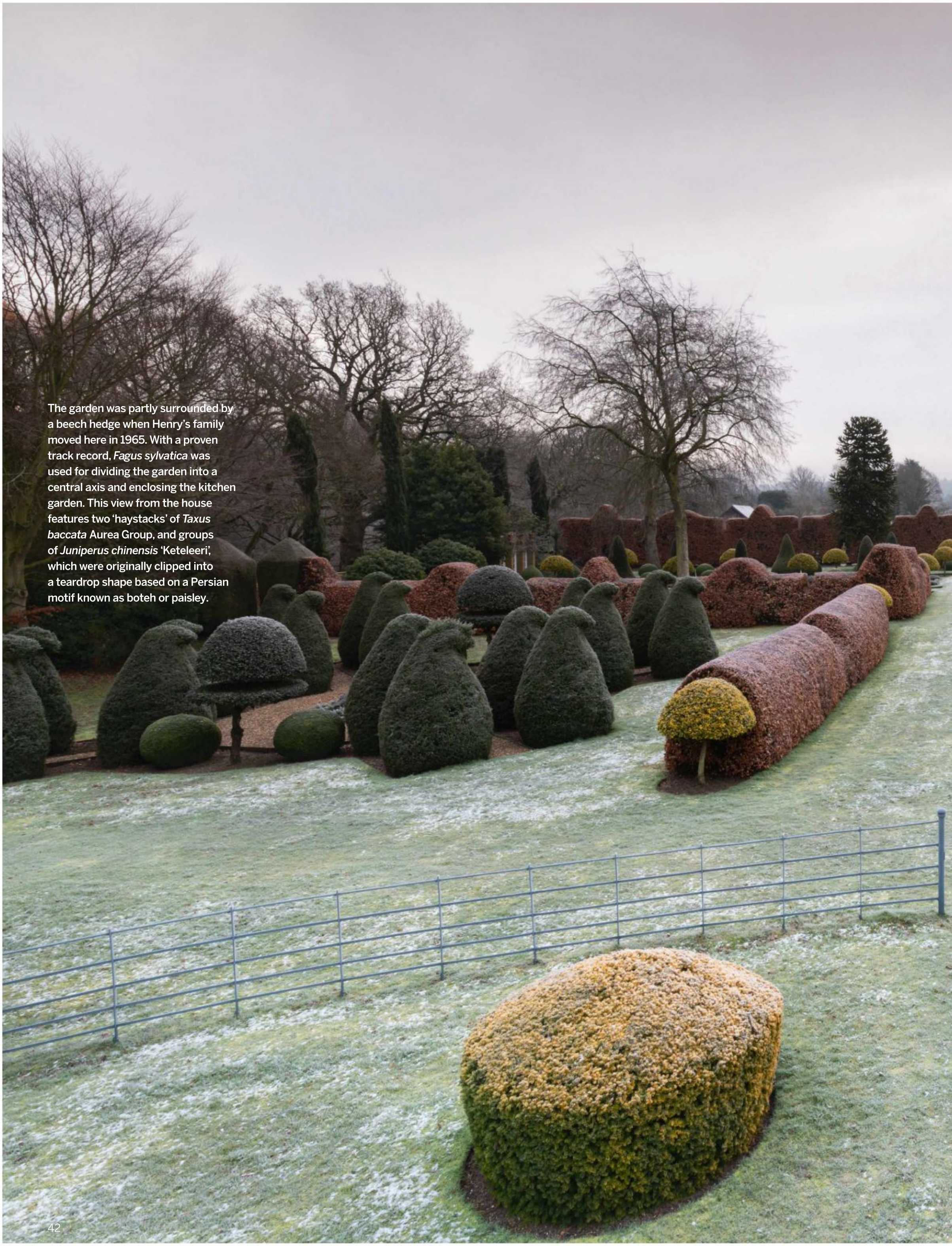
The process of cutting the topiary and boundary hedges takes Henry about 100 hours a year – or one calendar month – with days of rest in-between five-hour stints of focussed clipping. He has been cutting the perimeter hedge of beech since he was a teenager, after his parents moved to the old farmhouse from another property along the coast. Henry's mother kept goats in the area that is now divided by two formal canals; the second one on a lower level as the land drops down towards a wood on the other side of a wall. Without distant views from inside the garden, Henry and his art-historian wife Charlotte set about making sightlines and focal points within.

A plan from 1726 shows a square pavilion, and no further excuse was needed for Henry and Charlotte to build their own in the early 1990s, having recently taken over the garden from Henry's parents. With the advantage of afternoon light and a west-facing view towards the church on one side, the pavilion's front windows are a prime spot to examine the garden's layout. Unlike a historical Dutch garden of the 17th century, the site lacks symmetry, so the central axis provides an important focus away from the irregularities of the house and surrounding walls.

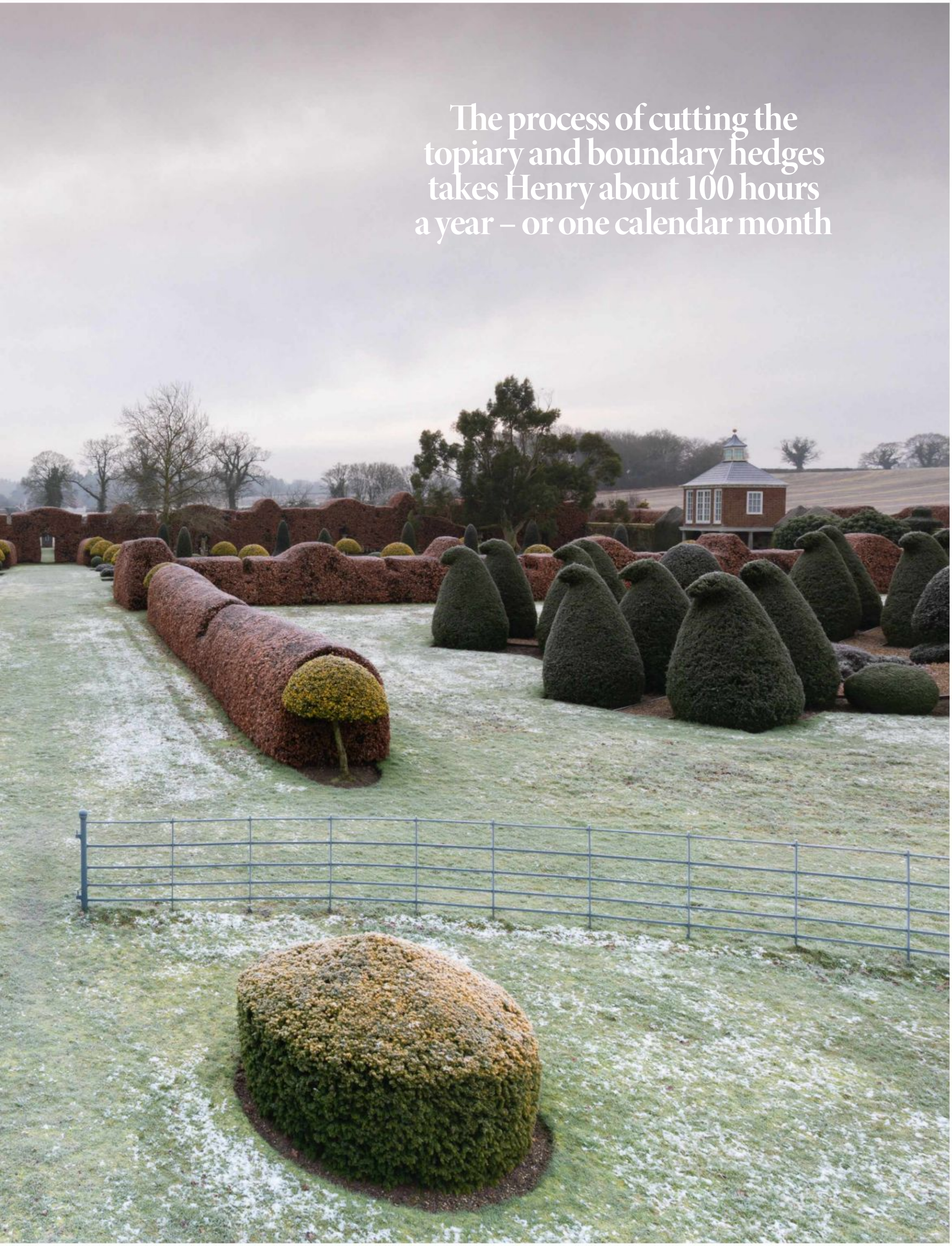
An orangery at the end of the canal seemed a good idea after the pavilion, although they soon found growing citrus too onerous. This is a garden that has been tempered by pragmatism; it is influenced by Westbury Court in Gloucestershire and Het Loo Palace in the Netherlands (the pre-Hampton Court home to monarchs William and Mary) but it is strictly homemade. "This garden has quite a lot of slip in it," says Henry, who is more interested in crisp edges than precise geometry. "Each bush is slightly misshapen and windblown." Cones were the objective down the main axis,

To continue turn to page 45 ▷

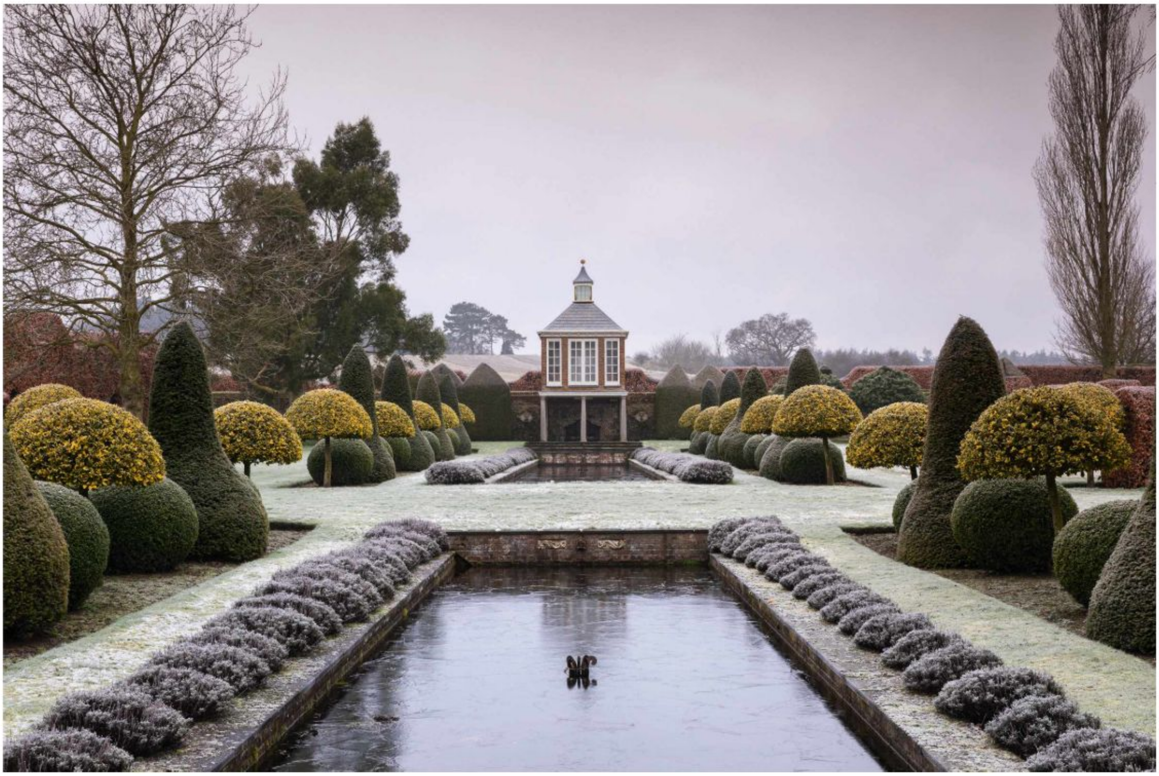
The central axis provides an important focus away from the irregularities of the house and surrounding walls



The garden was partly surrounded by a beech hedge when Henry's family moved here in 1965. With a proven track record, *Fagus sylvatica* was used for dividing the garden into a central axis and enclosing the kitchen garden. This view from the house features two 'haystacks' of *Taxus baccata* Aurea Group, and groups of *Juniperus chinensis* 'Keteleeri', which were originally clipped into a teardrop shape based on a Persian motif known as boteh or paisley.



The process of cutting the topiary and boundary hedges takes Henry about 100 hours a year – or one calendar month



▷ with sharply cut yews interspersed with conical standard holly. Box balls would bring roundness but now the whole scene has curves – which used to cause Henry consternation but now does not.

It probably helped when he saw that the precise cones in a place like Het Loo were being replaced, after the yews achieved their goal of growing up and out (rather than remaining small and narrow). He is not so obsessed that he is prepared to treat his topiaries as a version of bedding out, and his own taller specimens revel in their "middle-age spread". The former yew cones now resemble the oversized bottles that were once displayed in pharmacy windows, and it is difficult not to see animal characteristics in the shapes of *Juniperus chinensis* 'Keteleeri' closer to the house.

"They were also meant to be neat little cones," Henry explains. When they grew taller and wider, and he was getting bored of clipping all 32 of them, he cut them into the shape of a Persian leaf, blowing away from the prevailing wind from the west. The bushes fought back by not adapting the required curves. "They didn't do what I wanted them to do, and they got a bit like penguins, I'm afraid." They also looked as though they were going somewhere, so he reoriented the tops of 16 of them, to create a symmetrical dialogue across the garden's secondary axis.

Pairing the plant material with its function in a topiary garden came from an understanding of the land, and a realistic approach to after-care. "When we started doing this, it was incredibly dry. Planting on poor soil, you've got to have resilient plants," he says. "Other than watering them on planting, that's it as far as I'm concerned. They've got to look after themselves." Henry is self-taught, and wears his accomplishments lightly: "I don't know anything about plants. I know how to look after this lot… and I know quite a lot about wild plants and natural things." Chinese juniper, for example, "would be happy on a rocky hillside somewhere," so is suitable for dry, eastern England.

Topiary makes a good middle-storey for the trees Henry has planted. He has chosen unusual specimens, such as *Cedrus deodara* and *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *niphophila*, and tolerates a monkey puzzle tree that Charlotte picked up at a coffee morning. Clipped forms give the trees' free-ranging shapes extra clarity, especially in winter. During this season of non-growth, the garden creates its own views: from the pavilion, the raised walkway, or from the upper floors of the house. Never mind the original Dutch intention of status: this is simply a beautifully populated garden. ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Hunworth Hall opens occasionally for the NGS. See **ngs.org.uk** for details.

Above The pavilion was built in the 1990s, inspired by a 1726 drawing of the site featuring a square building near this spot. The canals are flanked by mounds of hardy English lavender, flowering in late summer, and repeats of yew flasks, box balls and parasols of golden holly (*Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Golden King').

Facing page above At the end of the long allée from the house, a small door in a wall provides the ultimate focal point, with a 'Drink me'-style bottle inside, a nod to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Crisp lines of topiary draw attention to taller, free-style trees.

Facing page below The old hall sits very comfortably in its surroundings, inspired by formal gardens of a roughly contemporary period. Every shrub was chosen for its hardiness and suitability to the conditions: drought and poor, gravelly soil. They also provide a surprising degree of colour in deep winter.

This attractive display of dried and preserved flowers, berries and seedheads, including a jewel-coloured mix of home grown, foraged and store-bought specimens, is an artwork in itself.

Threads of nature

Weave some seasonal flora into your festive decor this Christmas inspired by artist Olga Prinku's imaginative flowers-on-tulle

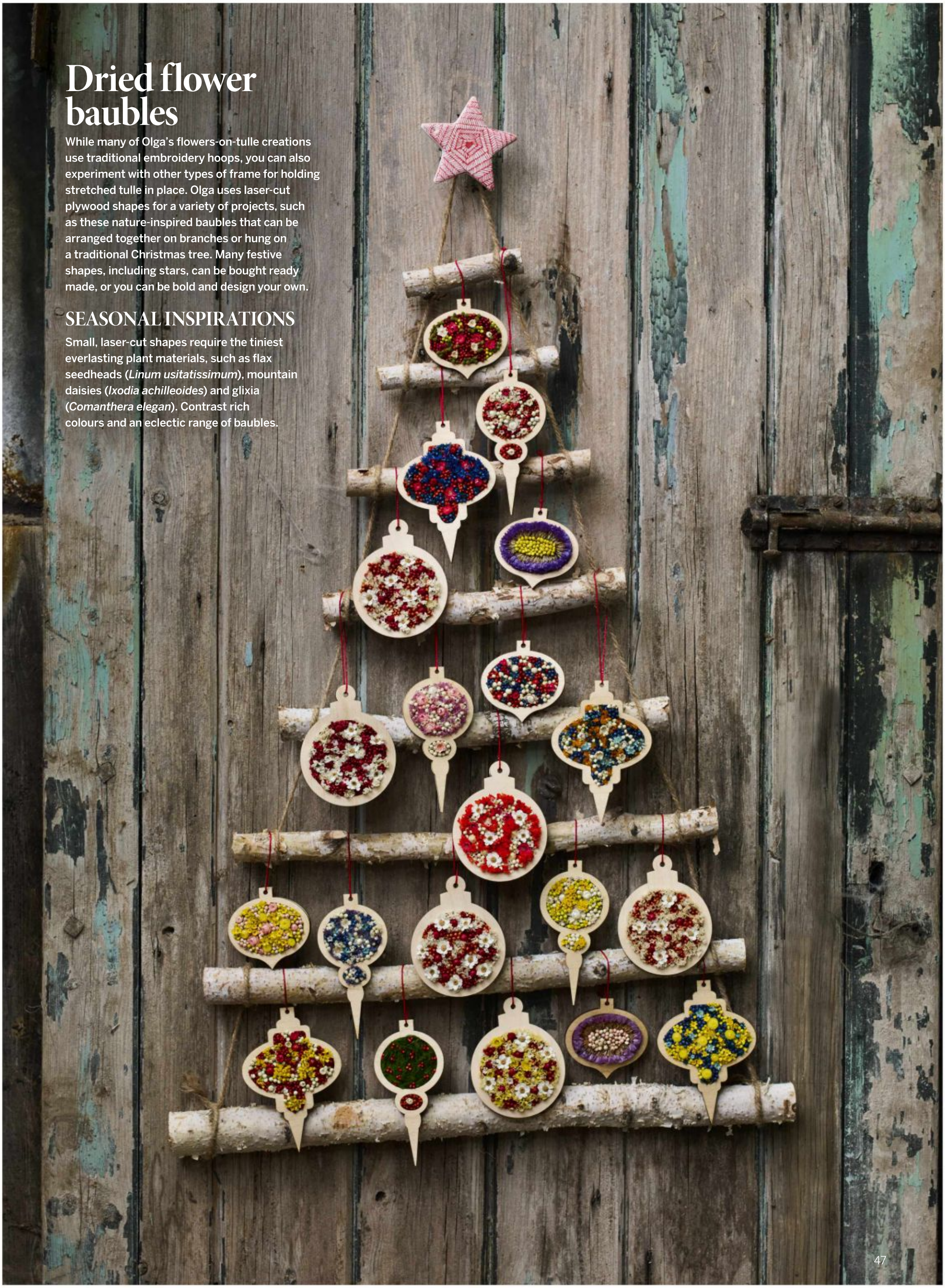
WORDS **SONYA PATEL ELLIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

Dried flower baubles

While many of Olga's flowers-on-tulle creations use traditional embroidery hoops, you can also experiment with other types of frame for holding stretched tulle in place. Olga uses laser-cut plywood shapes for a variety of projects, such as these nature-inspired baubles that can be arranged together on branches or hung on a traditional Christmas tree. Many festive shapes, including stars, can be bought ready made, or you can be bold and design your own.

SEASONAL INSPIRATIONS

Small, laser-cut shapes require the tiniest everlasting plant materials, such as flax seedheads (*Linum usitatissimum*), mountain daisies (*Ixodia achilleoides*) and glixia (*Comanthera elegan*). Contrast rich colours and an eclectic range of baubles.



Olga's studio is a treasure trove of hips, berries, grasses and dried flowers. These seasonal elements, along with the crafts of her homeland of Moldova, inspire her unique designs.

At first glance, Olga Prinku's hooped artworks appear to be composed using traditional embroidery threads. On closer inspection it's evident that most of the 'stitches' are in fact exquisite arrangements of dried and preserved flowers, foliage, berries and seedheads woven into a background of tulle (think ballet tutus and bridal veils).

Looking closely and finding patterns in nature is one of the driving forces of Olga's work. Having inadvertently invented her unique flowers-on-tulle technique several years ago – while making a festive wreath out of foraged flowers and an old garden riddle (sieve) – her craft has now expanded to include a range of beautiful designs.

Olga loves the luxury of silk tulle as a background but often uses delicate but strong polyester, as the holes of its weave are larger and therefore easier to thread plant stems through. Embroidery frames are also a firm favourite, as the tightening screw makes it easier to stretch the tulle, but she finds it's fun to experiment with ready-to-hang flexi hoops, oval frames for a vintage feel, or laser-cut shapes for themed decorations. "But most of all look to the beauty of nature," advises Olga. "The challenge is to enhance that existing beauty, and achieve something that is more than just the sum of its parts."

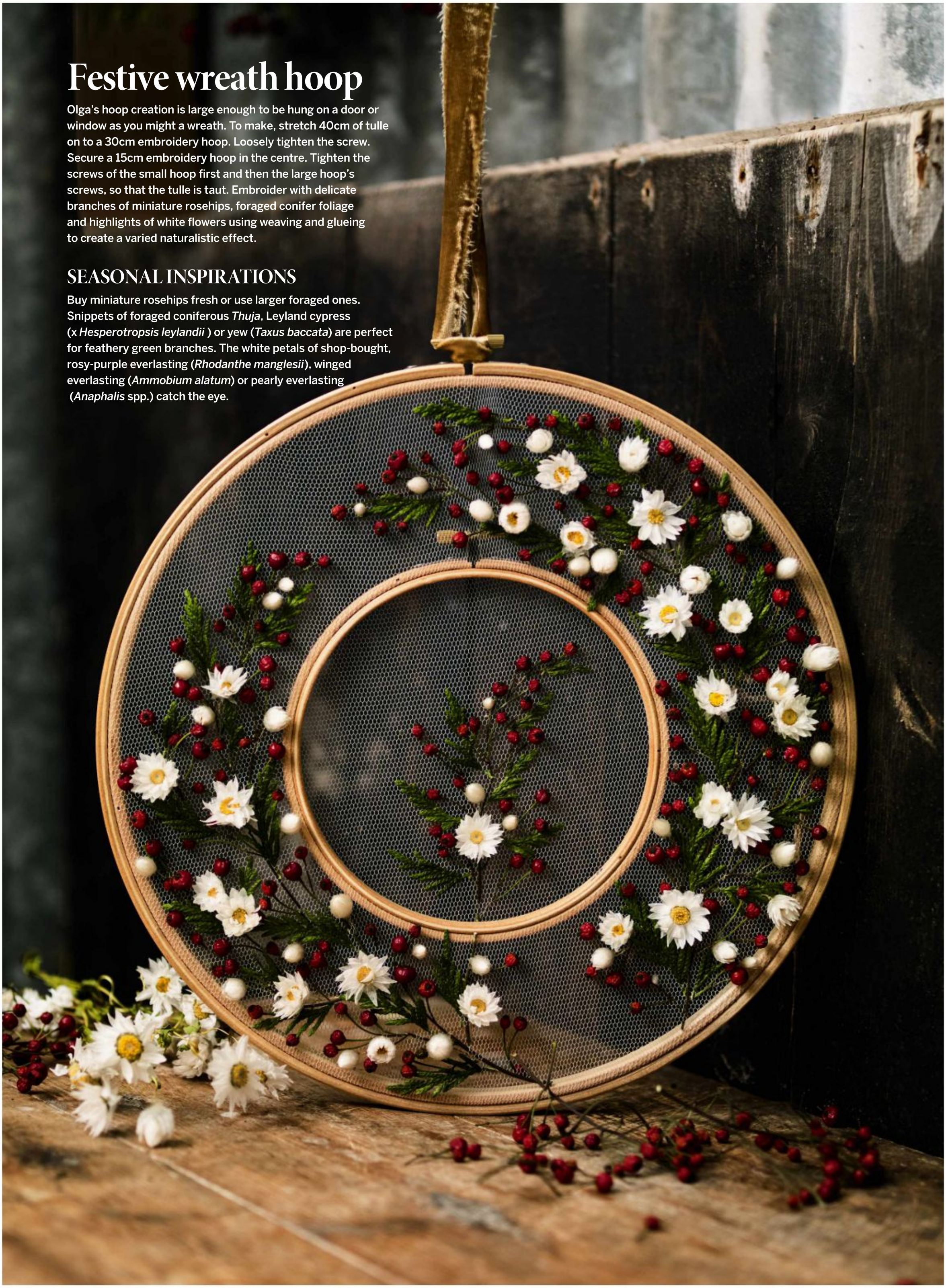
Connecting with nature inspires Olga to keep developing her craft. First, there's the gathering of natural materials, grown or found in the garden (delphinium seedpods are a favourite), foraged from the North Yorkshire moors near her home (she's now built a mental map of what grows where and when), or shop bought (artificially dyed flowers are perfect for adding a colour pop). Searching for materials has ▷

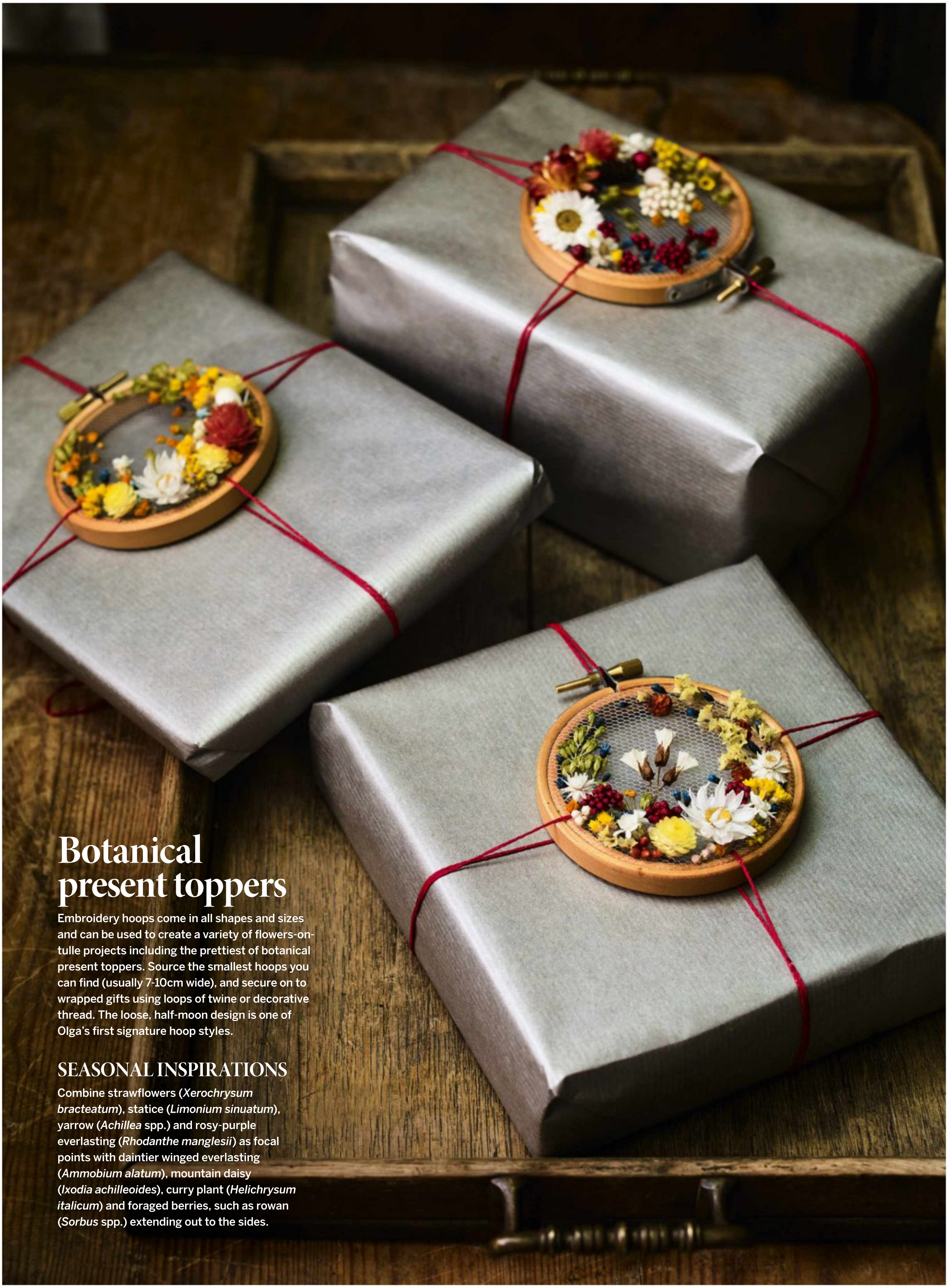
Festive wreath hoop

Olga's hoop creation is large enough to be hung on a door or window as you might a wreath. To make, stretch 40cm of tulle on to a 30cm embroidery hoop. Loosely tighten the screw. Secure a 15cm embroidery hoop in the centre. Tighten the screws of the small hoop first and then the large hoop's screws, so that the tulle is taut. Embroider with delicate branches of miniature rosehips, foraged conifer foliage and highlights of white flowers using weaving and glueing to create a varied naturalistic effect.

SEASONAL INSPIRATIONS

Buy miniature rosehips fresh or use larger foraged ones. Snippets of foraged coniferous *Thuja*, Leyland cypress (x *Hesperotropsis leylandii*) or yew (*Taxus baccata*) are perfect for feathery green branches. The white petals of shop-bought, rosy-purple everlasting (*Rhodanthe manglesii*), winged everlasting (*Ammobium alatum*) or pearly everlasting (*Anaphalis* spp.) catch the eye.





Botanical present toppers

Embroidery hoops come in all shapes and sizes and can be used to create a variety of flowers-on-tulle projects including the prettiest of botanical present toppers. Source the smallest hoops you can find (usually 7-10cm wide), and secure on to wrapped gifts using loops of twine or decorative thread. The loose, half-moon design is one of Olga's first signature hoop styles.

SEASONAL INSPIRATIONS

Combine strawflowers (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*), statice (*Limonium sinuatum*), yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) and rosy-purple everlasting (*Rhodanthe manglesii*) as focal points with daintier winged everlasting (*Ammobium alatum*), mountain daisy (*Ixodia achilleoides*), curry plant (*Helichrysum italicum*) and foraged berries, such as rowan (*Sorbus* spp.) extending out to the sides.

Foraging for botanical specimens, such as rosehips, firethorn berries, haws, ivy and conifers, is all part of the design process, but remember to leave some for the birds.

▷ definitely brought her closer to wildlife and the seasons, including a burgeoning interest in plant families and lifecycles. In winter, Olga's palette is all about "the white of snow and the reds and dark greens of the festive season" as shown in her festive wreath hoop (see previous page), a nuanced version of the flowers, plants and colours of traditional wreaths but made using just a handful of materials.

A few basic techniques are required for most projects: drying or preserving natural materials (in bunches hung upside down, left to dry in vases, or carefully placed in boxes of silica granules); conditioning stems (using embroidery scissors and a scalpel to trim them to size); and then weaving, glueing or sewing specimens on to the tulle.

Olga's stand-out tool for creating these flowers-on-tulle is a pair of 12cm, curved micro tweezers for pulling stalks through the holes in the net and precise positioning. When woven, flowers face sideways in a natural way, while glueing is ideal for smaller elements or for placing flowers face on. Together they can achieve more richness, depth and variety in a design. If you're looking for a mindful, plant-inspired activity to hunker down with through winter; one that will also produce some festive decorations for your home, this modern yet ephemeral craft may very well be it. ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find more inspiration in Olga's new book *Dried Flower Embroidery* (Quadrille, £15) and at **prinku.com**
You can also find many of the dried flowers mentioned and Olga's DIY hoop kits at driedandfloral.com

Parrotia persica
Commonly known as the Persian ironwood, this wide-spreading, deciduous tree produces small, red flowers in late winter and early spring. It is wind pollinated, but bees and butterflies are attracted to its nectar when there are few other trees in flower. 12m x 10m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b†.

CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

TREES FOR POLLINATING INSECTS

If you're thinking of adding a tree to your garden, then why not give nature a helping hand by choosing one that offers sustenance to bees, butterflies and other insects

WORDS **TONY KIRKHAM**

When we embark on designing our gardens, selecting the tree species that will make up the main framework, we generally think first about the aesthetic, ornamental attributes that they can provide. A good, hard-working tree might have a specific weeping, spreading or upright habit, attractive bark, interesting colourful flowers, ornamental fruits and vibrant autumn colour, but what about a tree with good flowering abilities that will also benefit our pollinating insects? They need reliable sources of nectar and we need the insects to aid the transfer of pollen from male to female flower parts to ensure both edible fruits and ornamental displays, such as the large, lantern-like seedpods of the golden rain tree, *Koelreuteria paniculata*. There's good awareness of pollinator-friendly annuals and perennials to include in our gardens, but with the encouragement to plant more trees, making a pollinator-friendly choice has the potential for multiple environmental benefits.

The pollen of many temperate trees, such as the ash (*Fraxinus*) and oak (*Quercus*), is transferred between trees by the wind, and some tree species are self pollinating, but others rely on insects. Bees immediately come to mind – and there are more than 250 different species of bees in the UK – but they aren't the only pollinators as there are hundreds of other insects, including butterflies and moths, wasps, flies and beetles, all of which have adapted their mouth parts to exploit the different flower types on different tree species, with the ability to take the food, as nectar and pollen, they need to survive.

To support the diverse range of insect species, we can plant a diverse range of both native and introduced tree species. This is also a sound approach for building resilience in our treescape, reducing the risk of threats from introduced pests and diseases and the changing climate, so it's good all round and a win-win situation. Insects are also present and active throughout the year and not just in spring, so whenever we can, we need to provide a food source for them during the months of autumn and winter, and there are choices of tree that can help bridge these gaps when fewer flowering plants are in bloom. For example, the buff-tailed bumble bee (*Bombus terrestris*) will forage on winter-flowering trees in our gardens through the milder days of the winter months, finding trees such as the winter-flowering cherry, *Prunus* x *subhirtella* 'Autumnalis', the evergreen strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo* or the Persian ironwood, *Parrotia persica* and other members of the Hamamelidaceae or witch hazel family.

Late summer is another season where there are fewer flowering trees in our garden palette. So to attract the late foragers, consider planting different species, such as the Japanese pagoda tree, *Styphnolobium japonicum,* or the seven-son flower tree, *Heptacodium miconioides,* a beautiful member of the Caprifoliaceae or honeysuckle family with white flowers from late summer well into autumn.

For those keen to aid pollinators, trees also make sense because their size means they can provide foraging insects with thousands of flowerheads, all in one concentrated location. Plus, planted in our streets and gardens, they become valuable points of connection between wilder foraging sites, adding to the wildlife corridors we are encouraged to create in our more urban areas.

It is a wonderful feeling to walk through a garden and hear the bees feasting on blossom before even seeing them. I remember one occasion when it captured my attention for such a long time, it made me late for a meeting. I was walking in the arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, past a solitary specimen of the North American round-fruited cockspur thorn, *Crataegus succulenta,* and became mesmerised by the sound of bee activity and by the sheer number of bees working the flowers like a well-versed team. I gave up trying to count them as there were far too many.

So, let's include pollinating insects in our tree selection criteria and give nature the helping hand that's needed for a better blooming garden. ❑

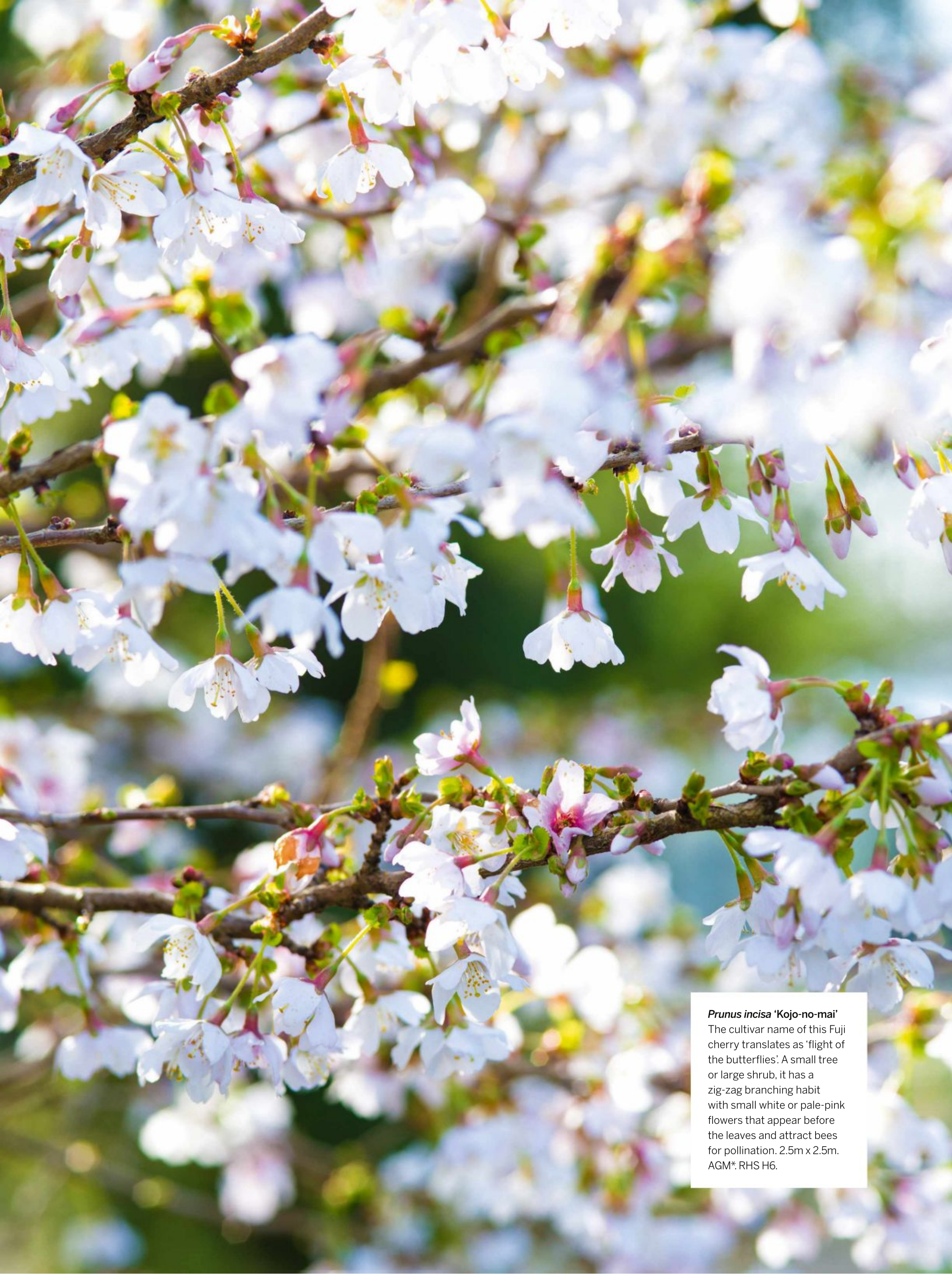
• Tony Kirkham is chair of the RHS Woody Plant Committee. His recommendations for the best trees for pollinating insects can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

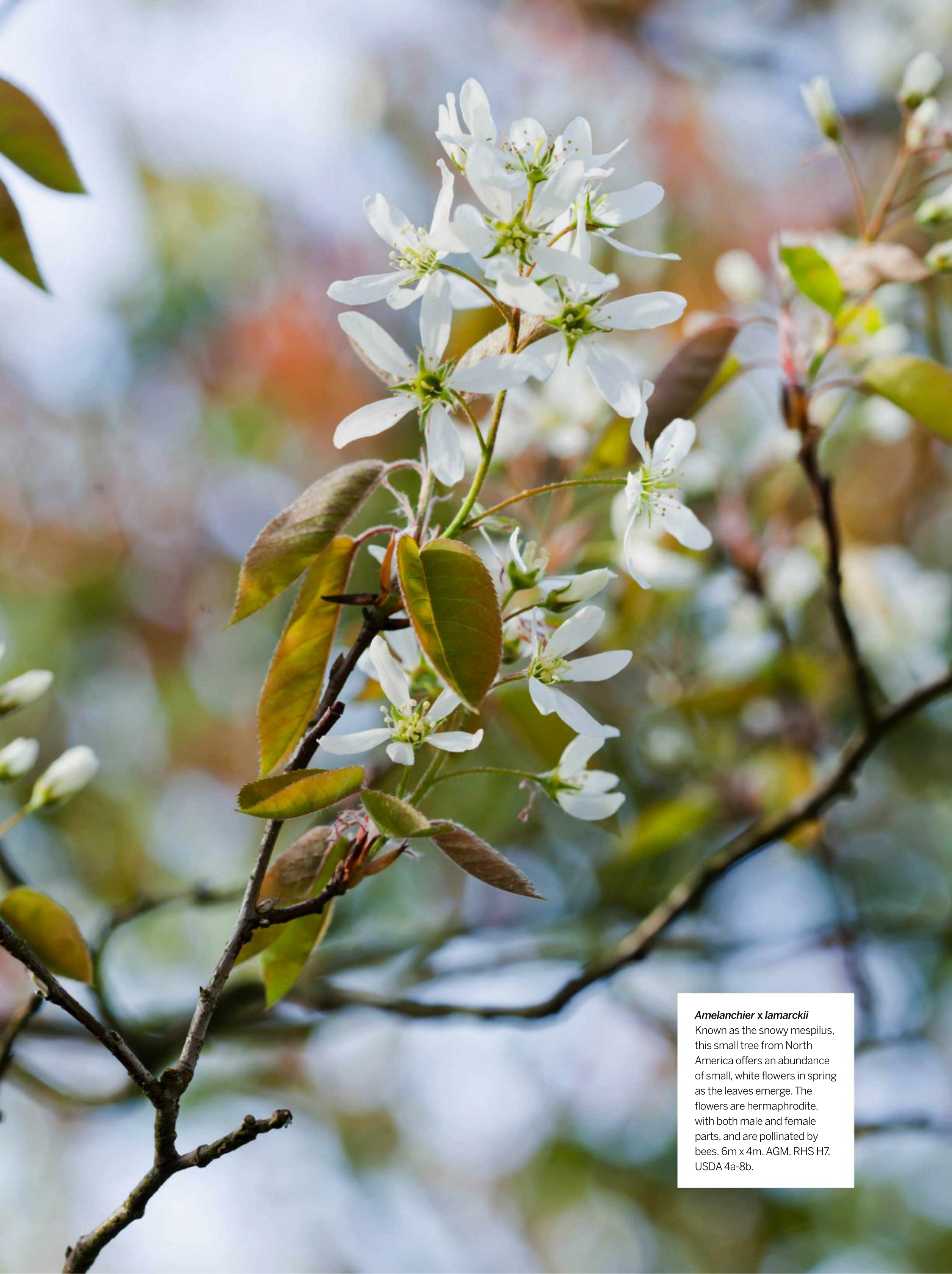
What Deciduous and evergreen, hardy, small to medium-sized trees or large shrubs with ornamental flowering and fruiting attributes.
Origins Northern hemisphere, from temperate North America to temperate Asia.
Season Flowering at different times throughout the year, across all four seasons.
Size Up to 25 metres high.
Conditions A fertile, moist but free-draining acid or alkaline soil in a sheltered position in the garden with full sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness Depending on genus, these trees have a hardiness rating of RHS H5-H7, and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 2a to 9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

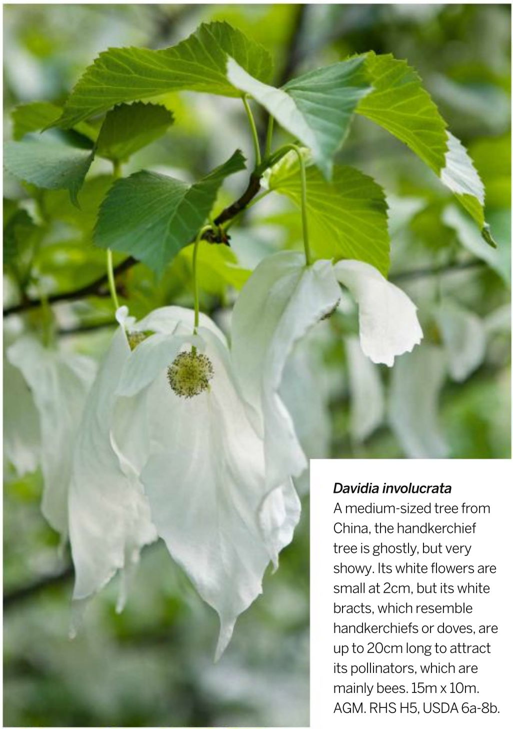
MAAYKE DE RIDDER

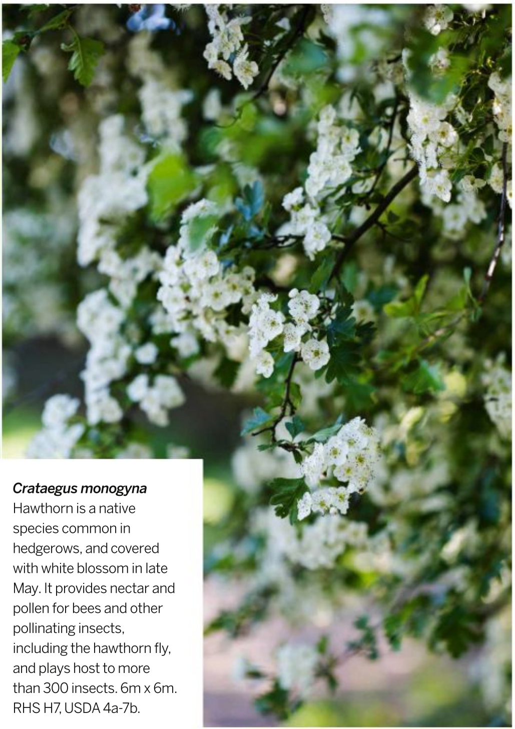


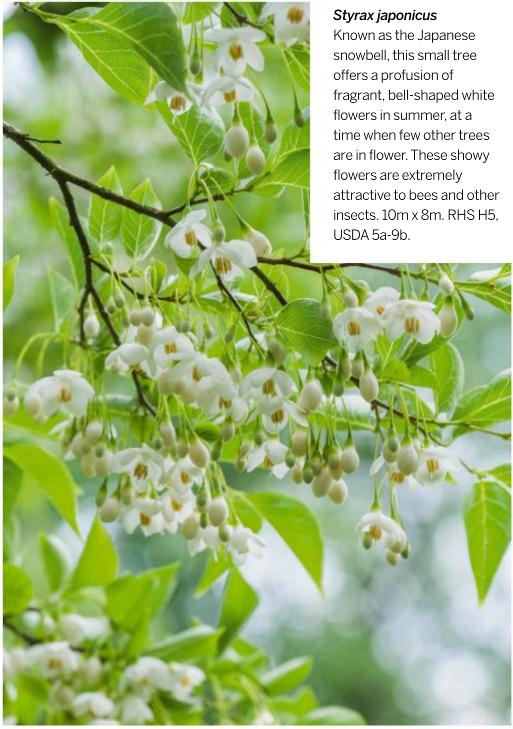
Prunus incisa **'Kojo-no-mai'** The cultivar name of this Fuji cherry translates as 'flight of the butterflies'. A small tree or large shrub, it has a zig-zag branching habit with small white or pale-pink flowers that appear before the leaves and attract bees for pollination. 2.5m x 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H6.

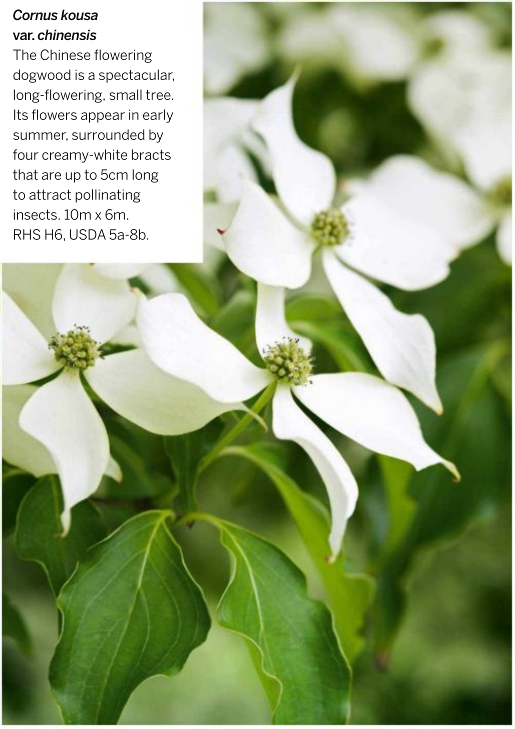


Amelanchier* x *lamarckii
Known as the snowy mespilus, this small tree from North America offers an abundance of small, white flowers in spring as the leaves emerge. The flowers are hermaphrodite, with both male and female parts, and are pollinated by bees. 6m x 4m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.









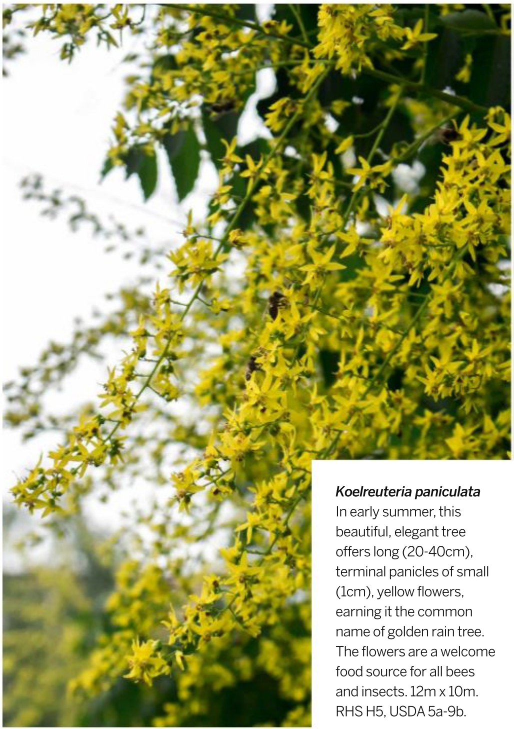
Davidia involucrata
A medium-sized tree from China, the handkerchief tree is ghostly, but very showy. Its white flowers are small at 2cm, but its white bracts, which resemble handkerchiefs or doves, are up to 20cm long to attract its pollinators, which are mainly bees. 15m x 10m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

Styrax japonicus
Known as the Japanese snowbell, this small tree offers a profusion of fragrant, bell-shaped white flowers in summer, at a time when few other trees are in flower. These showy flowers are extremely attractive to bees and other insects. 10m x 8m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

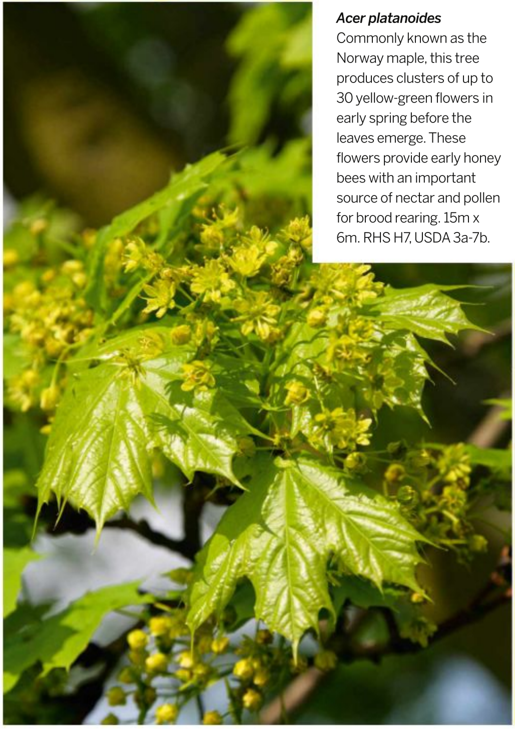
Crataegus monogyna
Hawthorn is a native species common in hedgerows, and covered with white blossom in late May. It provides nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects, including the hawthorn fly, and plays host to more than 300 insects. 6m x 6m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis
The Chinese flowering dogwood is a spectacular, long-flowering, small tree. Its flowers appear in early summer, surrounded by four creamy-white bracts that are up to 5cm long to attract pollinating insects. 10m x 6m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

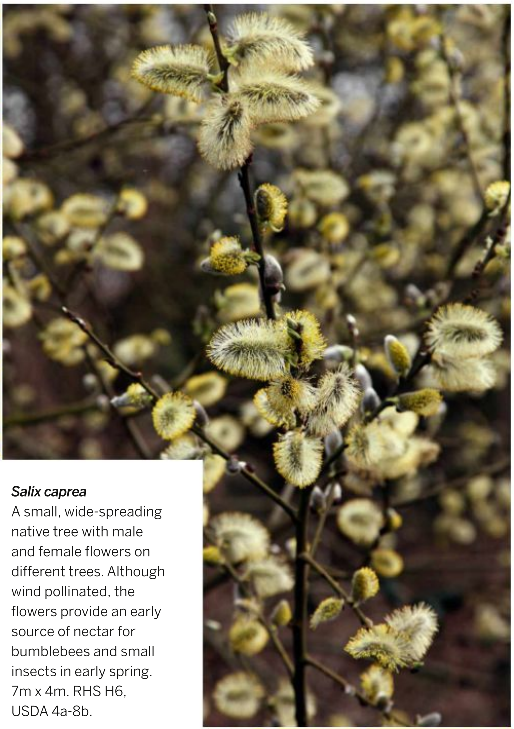
ROBERT MABIC, CLIVE NICHOLS · PAOLO PEJRONE, ITALY, ABIGAIL REX, PAUL DEBOIS, HOWARD RICE / ALL GAP PHOTOS



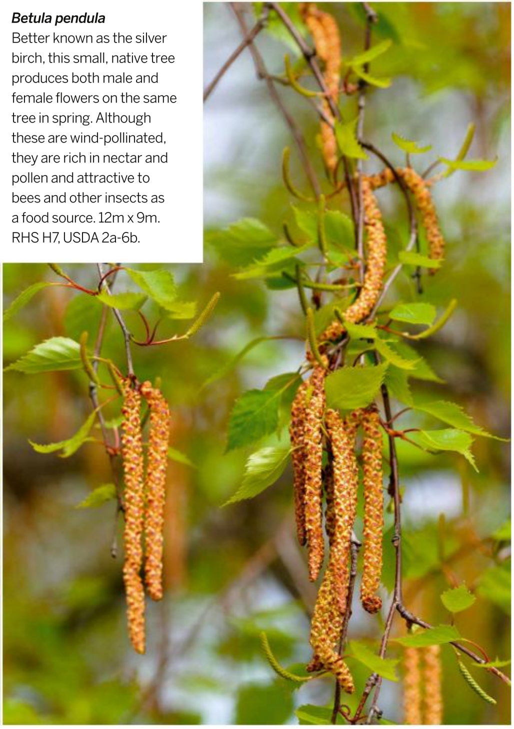
Koelreuteria paniculata
In early summer, this beautiful, elegant tree offers long (20-40cm), terminal panicles of small (1cm), yellow flowers, earning it the common name of golden rain tree. The flowers are a welcome food source for all bees and insects. 12m x 10m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.



Acer platanoides
Commonly known as the Norway maple, this tree produces clusters of up to 30 yellow-green flowers in early spring before the leaves emerge. These flowers provide early honey bees with an important source of nectar and pollen for brood rearing. 15m x 6m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.



Salix caprea
A small, wide-spreading native tree with male and female flowers on different trees. Although wind pollinated, the flowers provide an early source of nectar for bumblebees and small insects in early spring. 7m x 4m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.



Betula pendula
Better known as the silver birch, this small, native tree produces both male and female flowers on the same tree in spring. Although these are wind-pollinated, they are rich in nectar and pollen and attractive to bees and other insects as a food source. 12m x 9m. RHS H7, USDA 2a-6b.

IVANITA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS, BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, FLORAPIX / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Cercis siliquastrum
This wide-spreading, Mediterranean tree, also known as the Judas tree, is a member of the pea family. Its dark-pink flowers, which are pollinated by bees, appear first in spring before the leaves emerge, and again in autumn. 10m x 8m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Paulownia tomentosa
The foxglove tree is easily identifiable by the large, showy panicles of highly scented, lilac-blue flowers up to 30cm long. These are produced before the leaves in early spring and are high in nectar and pollen, which are important foods for bees. 12m x 12m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

ANDREA JONES / GAP PHOTOS; KLAUS STEINKAMP / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Cultivation

One of the most important aspects to get right before planting any tree in the garden is getting the selection correct – right tree in the right place. It is important to ensure there is sufficient space for when the tree reaches maturity, so that it doesn't become a nuisance; that the soil type and conditions are suitable; and that aspects, such as light levels and shelter, meet the tree's needs, especially during the early stages of its establishment.

With trees for pollinating insects, finding a sheltered position in the garden is also important, as most bees and other insects are unable to forage in strong, gusting winds. Be sure to buy from a reputable nursery or garden centre where the staff will be able to provide sound advice on the tree size, the various cultivars and root types available for planting.

The perfect planting season for most trees, whether they are bare root or container grown, starts in the autumn (October) and continues through the winter to late spring (April), providing the weather conditions are suitable with no snow or hard frosts. I am a fan of autumn planting, as we are now experiencing drier springs with little or no rainfall, meaning there is a greater need to start watering soon after a spring planting. Over the past ten years, I have seen root activity up to Christmas despite deciduous trees appearing dormant after leaf drop, so these newly planted trees will be off to a head start, and by late spring will already be part established and fending for themselves.

When planting any tree, the golden rules are: to dig a square hole twice the width of the tree's root ball and only the depth of the root system, no deeper; no compost in the backfill; and only stake the tree if it needs one for support. However, the most important planting tip is to plant the tree at the correct depth – the nursery mark on the tree or the top of the container should just be visible after planting. Investment in after-care is also important and all newly planted trees will need a helping hand with watering through their first two or three years, especially during periods of drought. Keeping a weed-free tree circle with organic mulch will help to reduce weed competition, provide any natural food, and preserve water at the same time.

The early years following planting is the time to carry out any formative pruning with a sharp pair of secateurs, which may involve removing any unwanted live or dead branches, maintaining a suitable crown shape, or raising the lower canopy. Some species will flower soon after planting, while with some others you will need to give them time to mature so some patience is required. But the reward is well worth the wait.

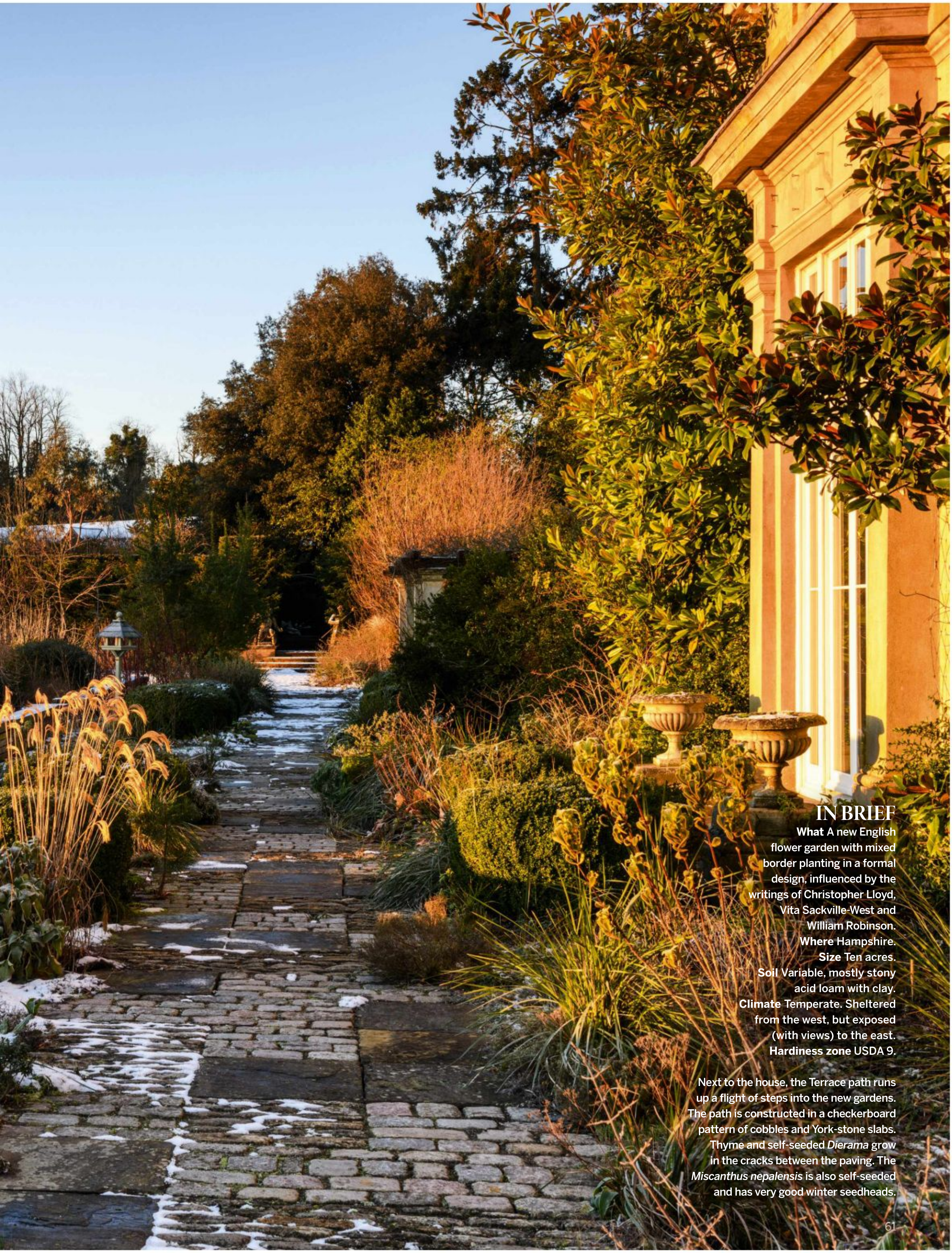
Where to see and buy

- **Barcham Trees**
  Eye Hill Drove,
  Soham, Ely,
  Cambridgeshire CB7 5XF.
  Tel 01353 720748,
  barcham.co.uk
- **Bluebell Arboretum and Nursery**
  Annwell Lane, Smisby,
  Ashby-de-la-Zouch,
  Derbyshire LE65 2TA.
  Tel 01530 413700,
  bluebellnursery.com
- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth,
  Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860316,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Frank P Matthews**
  Berrington Court,
  Tenbury Wells,
  Worcestershire WR15 8TH.
  Tel 01584 812800,
  frankpmatthews.com
- **Hillier Nurseries Ltd**
  Ampfield House,
  Ampfield, Romsey,
  Hampshire SO51 9PA.
  Tel 01794 368733,
  hillier.co.uk
- **Majestic Trees**
  Chequers Meadow, Chequers Hill, Flamstead, nr St Albans,
  Hertfordshire AL3 8ET.
  Tel 01582 843881,
  majestictrees.co.uk

Room for imagination

In the last of his seasonal series, head gardener Matthew Reese reveals how Malverleys' strong structure helps support the garden's accomplished planting, links it to the surrounding parkland and comes into its own as the garden slips into winter

WORDS MATTHEW REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



IN BRIEF

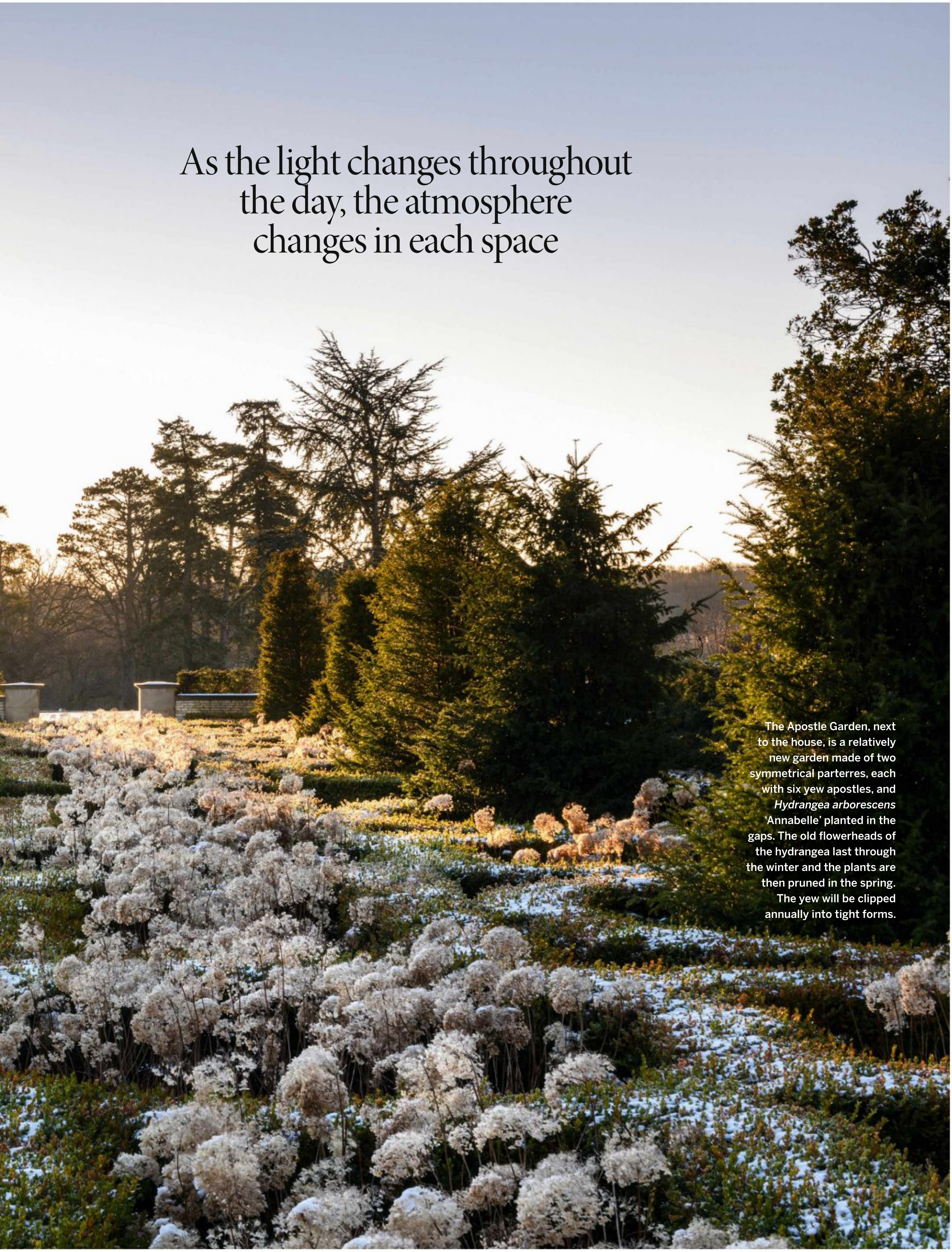
What A new English flower garden with mixed border planting in a formal design, influenced by the writings of Christopher Lloyd, Vita Sackville-West and William Robinson.
Where Hampshire.
Size Ten acres.
Soil Variable, mostly stony acid loam with clay.
Climate Temperate. Sheltered from the west, but exposed (with views) to the east.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Next to the house, the Terrace path runs up a flight of steps into the new gardens. The path is constructed in a checkerboard pattern of cobbles and York-stone slabs. Thyme and self-seeded *Dierama* grow in the cracks between the paving. The *Miscanthus nepalensis* is also self-seeded and has very good winter seedheads.

The objective when designing the new English Flower Garden at Malverleys was to link the house to a beautiful garden, and for both to sit comfortably within the surrounding countryside. There was an existing walled garden containing an ornate kitchen garden and white garden, and there was also a narrow terrace garden shadowing the house. Between the two was a large sea of lawn punctuated by swathes of ordinary *Rhododendron ponticum*. There were also many specimen trees dotted across the lawn and a wooded area that would require careful consideration when laying out the new design.

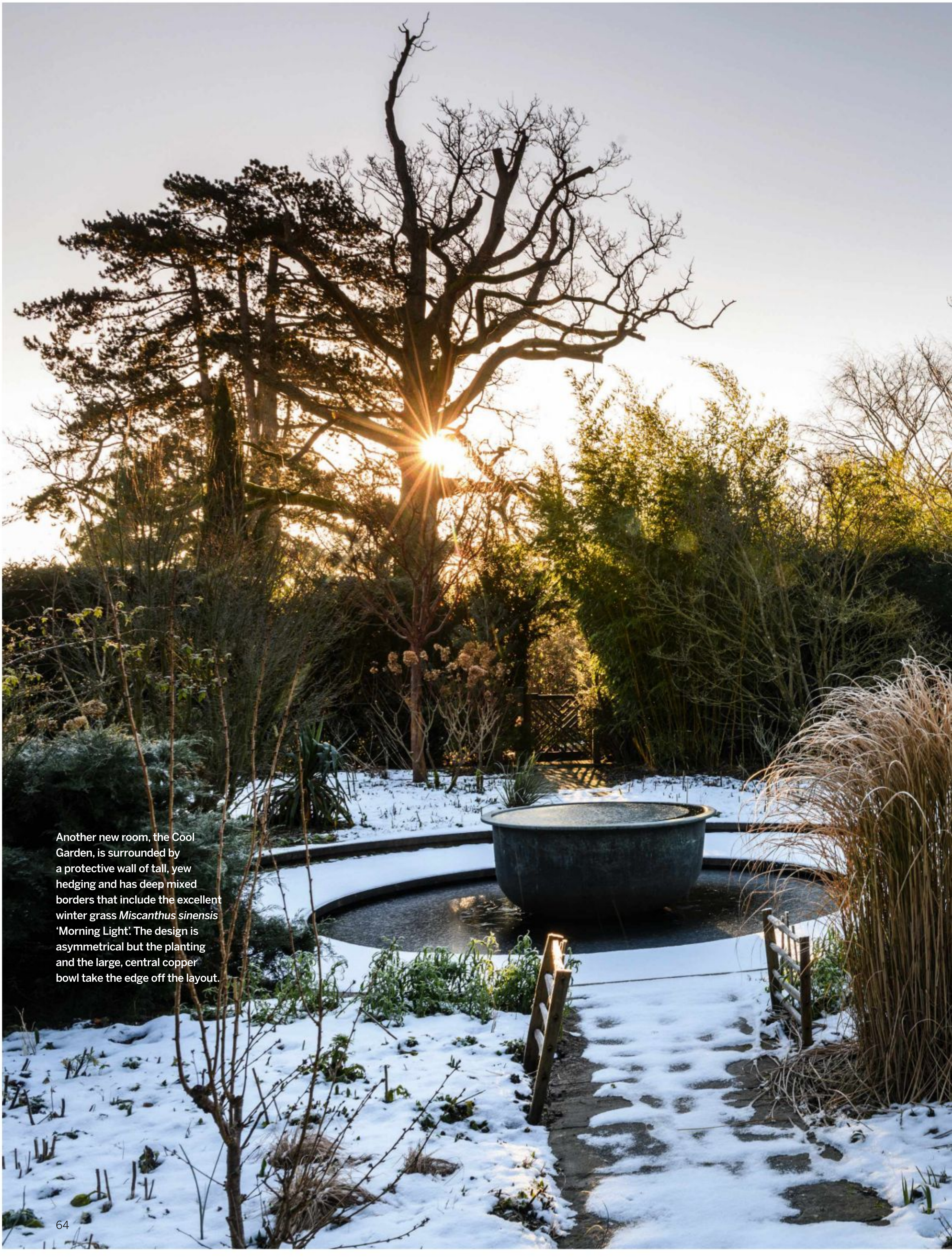
The decision was made to remove the rhododendrons, and use the lawn space as the canvas for a new flower garden composed of a series of connecting 'rooms' or enclosures that would connect the house to the walled garden. The style is influenced by the gardens at Great Dixter, and follows a similar course using thick yew hedging to divide the garden into sheltered rooms, all connected by York-stone paths.

At Malverleys, the garden rooms are separated by 1.5m-wide hedges, clipped to complement the architecture of the house. The reclaimed York-stone paving was laid out to link the rooms via a series of intimate paths and, together with the yew hedging, it forms a unifying framework through the garden, even though the garden rooms have contrasting atmospheres. The hedging is also the perfect dark foil against which to set the planting, and acts as a remarkably effective windbreak, but remember that yew



As the light changes throughout the day, the atmosphere changes in each space

The Apostle Garden, next to the house, is a relatively new garden made of two symmetrical parterres, each with six yew apostles, and *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' planted in the gaps. The old flowerheads of the hydrangea last through the winter and the plants are then pruned in the spring. The yew will be clipped annually into tight forms.



Another new room, the Cool Garden, is surrounded by a protective wall of tall, yew hedging and has deep mixed borders that include the excellent winter grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light'. The design is asymmetrical but the planting and the large, central copper bowl take the edge off the layout.

▷ roots are hungry and penetrating, and may need controlling so they don't compete with the plants in the borders.

To add a sense of drama while moving through the garden, light and space become part of the design. As the light changes throughout the day, the atmosphere changes in each space, which highlights the depth of the planting and the beauty of the individual plants. Moving through the garden, you will often find yourself travelling along tight, shady woodland paths before entering the more open garden rooms through small gaps in the yew hedging. To further emphasise the movement from one space to the next, all the rooms are on their own level, and you enter or leave each space by going up or down a series of steps. Inspired by similar features at Sissinghurst, we have also used narrow yew corridors or allées, which allow for the option to bypass individual gardens and create a contrast to the more open areas. The rooms are quite generous in size and were designed to house deep borders, allowing for depth in the planting compositions and to comfortably accommodate mixed plantings of small trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials without looking too congested.

One of the major challenges when creating the new garden at Malverleys was harmonising the garden with the surrounding landscape and countryside. For the design to accommodate the existing trees and buildings, many of the rooms could not be perfectly symmetrical spaces. However, the garden is not usually viewed from above, but from within, and any asymmetry is not obvious now the borders have been planted. It is far more important for the design to marry with the landscape. We used strong linear vistas to focus on the buildings and trees and incorporate ▷

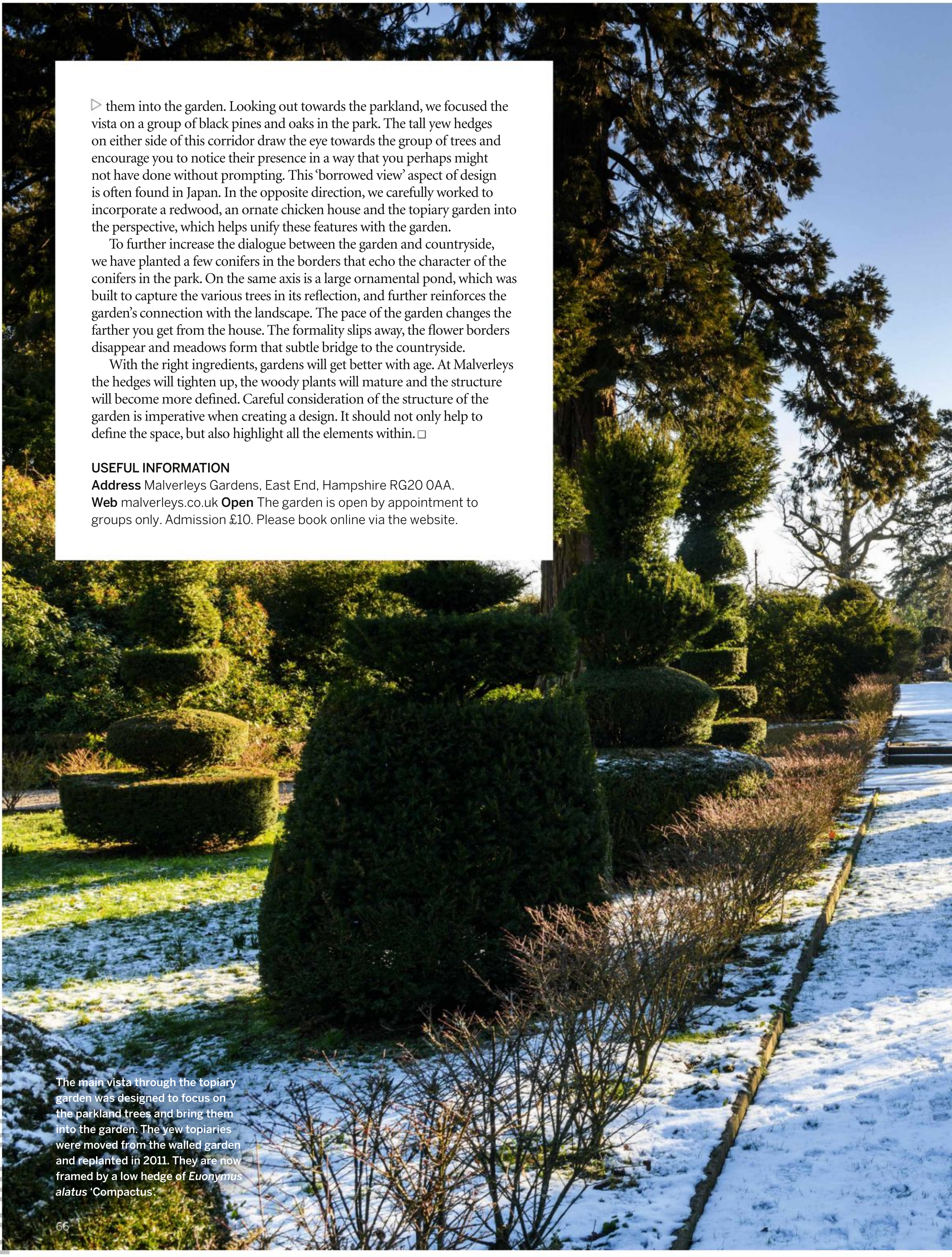
Yew hedging forms a unifying framework, even though rooms have contrasting atmospheres

▷ them into the garden. Looking out towards the parkland, we focused the vista on a group of black pines and oaks in the park. The tall yew hedges on either side of this corridor draw the eye towards the group of trees and encourage you to notice their presence in a way that you perhaps might not have done without prompting. This 'borrowed view' aspect of design is often found in Japan. In the opposite direction, we carefully worked to incorporate a redwood, an ornate chicken house and the topiary garden into the perspective, which helps unify these features with the garden.

To further increase the dialogue between the garden and countryside, we have planted a few conifers in the borders that echo the character of the conifers in the park. On the same axis is a large ornamental pond, which was built to capture the various trees in its reflection, and further reinforces the garden's connection with the landscape. The pace of the garden changes the farther you get from the house. The formality slips away, the flower borders disappear and meadows form that subtle bridge to the countryside.

With the right ingredients, gardens will get better with age. At Malverleys the hedges will tighten up, the woody plants will mature and the structure will become more defined. Careful consideration of the structure of the garden is imperative when creating a design. It should not only help to define the space, but also highlight all the elements within. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Address Malverleys Gardens, East End, Hampshire RG20 0AA.
Web malverleys.co.uk **Open** The garden is open by appointment to groups only. Admission £10. Please book online via the website.



The main vista through the topiary garden was designed to focus on the parkland trees and bring them into the garden. The yew topiaries were moved from the walled garden and replanted in 2011. They are now framed by a low hedge of *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus'.

Mobilism.org

We used strong linear vistas to focus on the buildings and trees and incorporate them into the garden

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

CHRIS COLLINS

The former *Blue Peter* gardener, and now head of horticulture for Garden Organic, on his colourful CV, selling roses to the Japanese and the perils of living next door to hungry gorillas

WORDS ALYS FOWLER PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Chris Collins likes answering job adverts, particularly if they have a hint of the extraordinary about them; those where your roommates are chimps, for example, or your workplace is a Royal church. Few people can claim to have so varied or unconventional a CV. It's driven in part by a sense of adventure, but Chris's passion for his subject is so infectious and exuberant, it's easy to see how he's traversed the globe for his love of plants.

It all started back in 1984, in his home town of Brighton, where as a teenager he got an apprenticeship with the famous Brighton Parks. "I got to work with a lot of old boys, really good gardeners, who gave me a good standing," he says. It was there where he saw a job advert in the back of *Horticulture Week* for the diploma at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and thought: "I'll try for that." The next thing he knew, he was in Edinburgh loving every minute. "You were being taught by world authorities in this amazing garden," he says.

> I AM A PEOPLE PERSON AS MUCH AS A PLANT PERSON, AND I LOVE GETTING PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOOR

After finishing at Edinburgh, eager for adventure, he went to work at the Limbe Botanic Garden in Cameroon. The garden was a window for the surrounding landscape, and when he wasn't gardening, he was collecting in the rainforest around it. It was here that he ended up living with four rescue baby chimpanzees in his house. "There was an animal sanctuary next door," he says by way of explanation. "I was making a bed for plants from the Zingiberaceae family when a gorilla that had recently been rescued came and ate the whole bed in a morning." He loved his time there, camping on the top of Mount Cameroon watching the Milky Way and fireflies, but after eight months it was time to come home.

He managed just six weeks in Edinburgh before he saw an advert in *The Scotsman*: 'gardener wanted in Japan'. Six months later he was back on a plane, this time to Tokyo to work for Mitsukoshi, Japan's oldest department store. His job was to sell the "concept of English gardening". Here he specialised in container, balcony and roof-top gardens, all subjects perfect for this most cramped of cities. He was also the first person to sell David Austin roses in Japan. "It was exciting and full on; a brilliant experience to set up such a thing," he says. But after four years or so, he was ready for home.

He came back to a job at the South Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and stayed for 14 months before another job advert caught his eye, this time as head gardener for 'The Queen's church' or, as the rest of us might call it, Westminster Abbey. The gardens had been rather neglected, the soil was terrible and there was just a tiny lean-to greenhouse for propagation, but the job allowed Chris to flourish. He was able to combine all this previous knowledge and just "plant up loads of stuff" – everything from exotic container gardens to bedding from his parks days to trees.

But those job adverts, they just kept appearing. "Out the blue I saw an advert for a screen testing for TV," he says. Of course, he had to answer it. This led to the series *The Plantsman* on BBC Two and from there to a slot on ITV's *This Morning*, and eventually to the famous children's series, *Blue Peter*, where Chris got the coveted gardener role, previously held by Percy Thrower. "*Blue Peter* was such a laugh. I got to do mad stuff that I loved, like meet Scooby-Doo and create a hedgehog garden. And the feedback from the kids was amazing, I got 5,000 letters for that hedgehog garden," he says proudly. He spent a decade teaching children (and no doubt a few parents too) how to garden, but when the programme moved from London to Salford, he decided it was time to move on again.

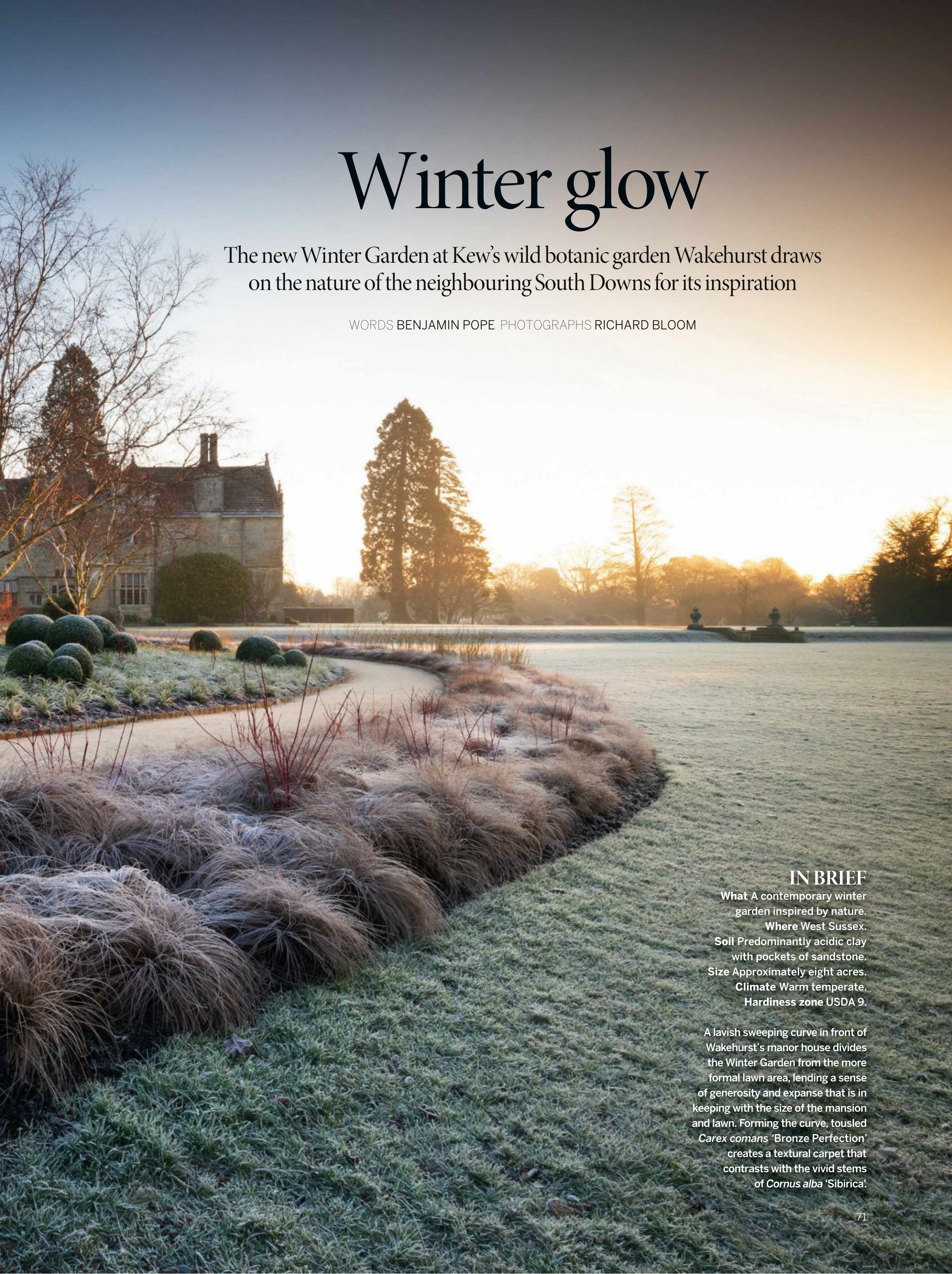
These days he divides his time between running his own education and consulting company, CM Collins Horticulture, and his job as head of horticulture for the organic gardening charity Garden Organic, where his role is also largely educational. It's something he clearly enjoys, whether it's giving talks or creating designs for housing associations and community gardens. "I am a people person as much as a plant person, and I love getting people through the door," he says.

He acknowledges that Garden Organic is coming out of a hard period. Two years ago, to remain financially viable, the charity sold its Ryton gardens to Coventry University, although it still maintains its headquarters and Heritage Seed Library at the Warwickshire site. But with a new CEO, Fiona Taylor, Chris is confident Garden Organic has a bright future. "The pandemic has given us three million new gardeners," he says. "How are we going to reach them? If I can pass on the knowledge about the social and environmental implications of gardening to as many people, including kids and university students, as I can – and show how organic gardening has a huge part to play in that – then that would be great." ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Garden Organic, Ryton Gardens, Wolston Lane, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire CV8 3LG. Tel 024 7630 3517, gardenorganic.org.uk

GARDENERS SHED



Winter glow

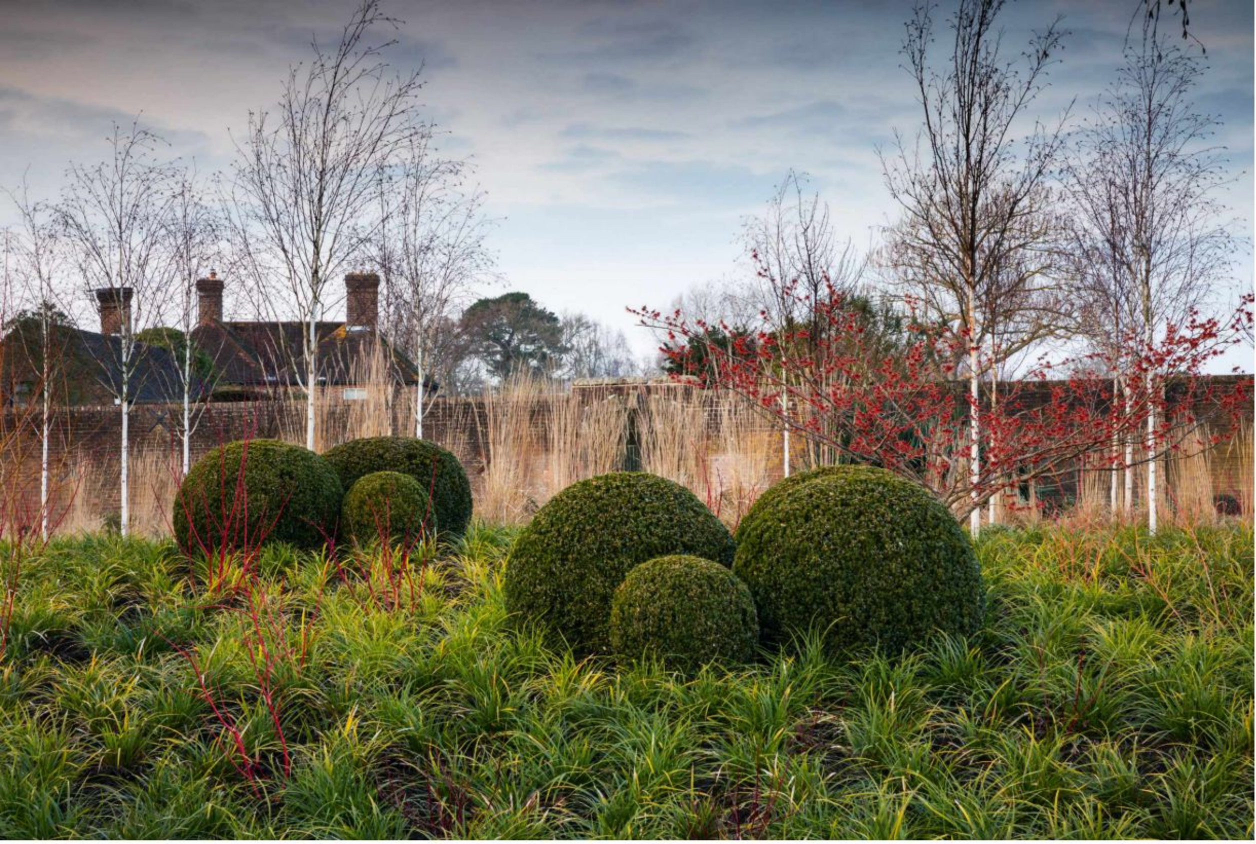
The new Winter Garden at Kew's wild botanic garden Wakehurst draws on the nature of the neighbouring South Downs for its inspiration

WORDS **BENJAMIN POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

IN BRIEF

What A contemporary winter garden inspired by nature.
Where West Sussex.
Soil Predominantly acidic clay with pockets of sandstone.
Size Approximately eight acres.
Climate Warm temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

A lavish sweeping curve in front of Wakehurst's manor house divides the Winter Garden from the more formal lawn area, lending a sense of generosity and expanse that is in keeping with the size of the mansion and lawn. Forming the curve, tousled *Carex comans* 'Bronze Perfection' creates a textural carpet that contrasts with the vivid stems of *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica'.



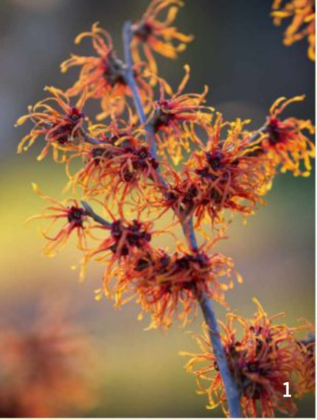
Above Lush, evergreen *Carex morrowii* provides groundcover and the setting for a composition of static, spherical *Buxus sempervirens* and upright trunks of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*, creating visual movement through colour, texture and shape that is enhanced by the accents of vertical seedheads from *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.

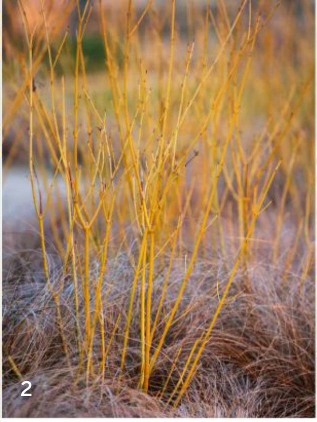
In the gentle rolling hills of the Sussex High Weald sits a wild botanic garden with the name Wakehurst. It's the home of the Millennium Seed Bank, a James Bond-style bunker that ensures the future preservation of more than 2.4 billion seeds. Often referred to as 'Kew in the country', Wakehurst has long been considered a botanical haven and is still regarded as holding one of the finest collections of temperate flora in the world. Bequeathed to the National Trust in 1963, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, has leased the property since 1965, managing some 535 acres that encompass wetlands, woodland, pinetum, garden, meadows and a nature reserve.

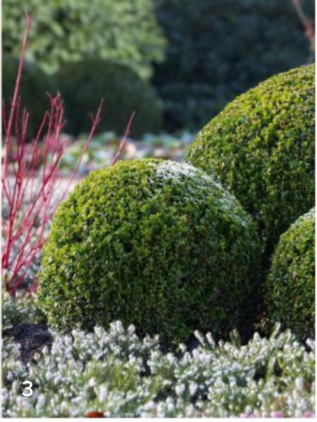
Despite this, Wakehurst receives little public attention in comparison to its globally renowned London-dwelling sister. However, its current curatorial team has strong ambitions to change this, and under the guidance of new director Ed Ikin, the gardeners are working hard to showcase the historic collection to best effect. Old features, such as the Meadow Boardwalk, have been improved, while new developments include the Coronation Meadow, created in 2015, and more recently the American Prairie. In 2017, garden supervisor Francis Annette was given the task of redesigning an existing Winter Garden that dated back to 1986. Having worked in the garden for 18 years and studied at the London College of Garden Design, Francis set about evaluating the site. "The existing garden was of its time; not bad, just dated. Planting was mixed and heavy, with interesting specimens scattered through so there was no real impact."

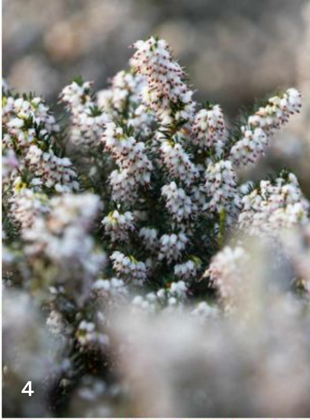
The location nonetheless was perfect: nestled beside the walled garden on the west side of the Elizabethan manor house, overlooking a large expanse of lawn that allowed for low winter sunlight going into evening. Inspiration for change came from the surrounding countryside, the multi-layered vegetation found on the Downs. "In nature, archetypal plant species appear en masse: with just two or three dominant species, they have a real impact and evoke an increased emotional response." In the Winter Garden this translates to swathes of vegetation that interlock over mounded beds, creating undulating interest and drama while referencing the lowland hills of the Downs. Canopy and height are created using ornamental birches, which structurally help to generate a scale that is in keeping with the proportions of the manor house. Lower-storey plants

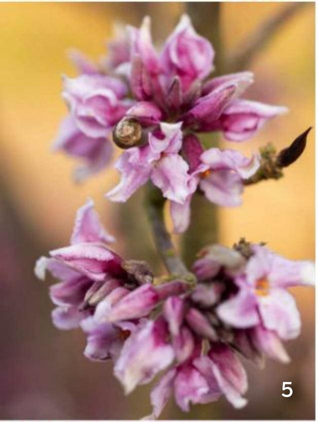
To continue turn to page 77 ▷

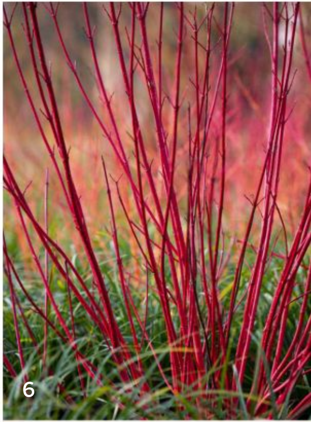


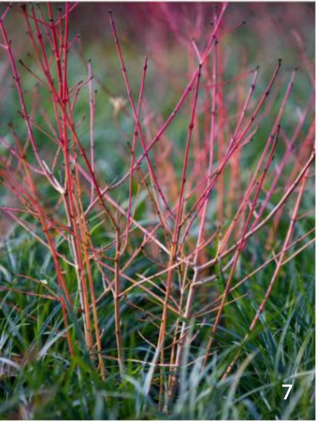


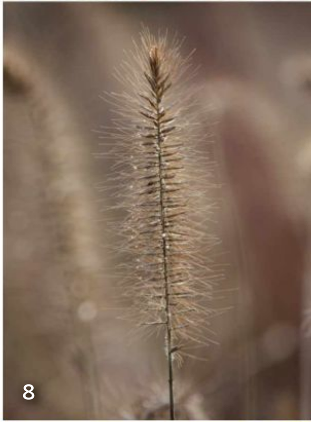












24 KEY PLANTS

1 *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Orange Peel'
Deciduous shrub with a vase-shaped habit and good autumn colour, having scented orange flowers on naked stems during winter. 3m x 3m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b†.

2 *Cornus sericea* 'Bud's Yellow'
A striking shrub with yellowish-green stems, becoming brighter in winter after leaf fall. Intense colour on youngest growth following hard pruning. 2.5m x 2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

3 *Buxus sempervirens*
Small, oval, evergreen leaves on this dense shrub, which is often used for topiary and hedging. Responds well to clipping and pruning. 60cm x 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *Erica* x *darleyensis* f. *albiflora* 'Silberschmelze'
A tough, evergreen shrub with needle-like foliage and small, scented, white flowers that appear throughout winter. 40cm x 80cm. RHS H5.

5 *Daphne bholua* var. *glacialis*
A semi-evergreen, upright shrub grown for its highly scented, late-winter flowers that open white from pink buds and appear in small terminal clusters. 3m x 2m. RHS H4.

6 *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica'
A suckering, deciduous shrub forming a thicket of colourful red stems, becoming conspicuous after a colourful leaf fall in autumn. 2.5m x 2m. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

7 *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire'
A spreading shrub with buttery-yellow autumn foliage that falls to reveal yellow stems. These change to orange and then red at the tips. 2m x 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

8 *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'
A compact, clump-forming grass with fluffy, bottle-brush seedheads in late summer, which attractively persist into winter with the old foliage. 2m x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.

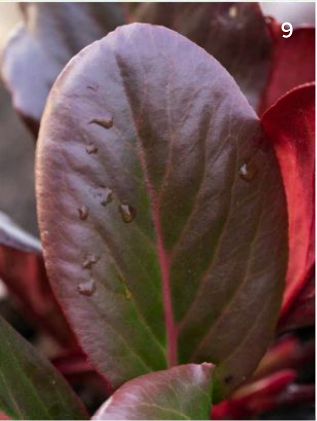
9 *Bergenia* 'Eroica'
Large, evergreen leaves of bronze and green, turning shades of burgundy during winter. In spring it has bright-magenta flowers. 40cm x 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

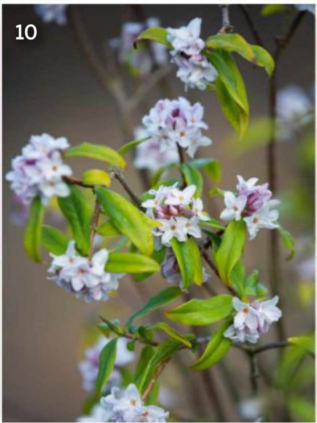
10 *Daphne bholua*
A beautiful shrub with semi-evergreen foliage and heavily scented, star-shaped, pinkish-white flowers in late winter. 3m x 1.5m. RHS H4.

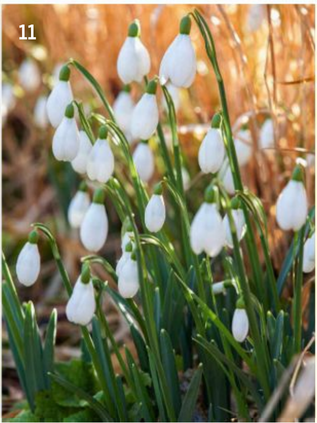
11 *Galanthus* 'S. Arnott'
This large snowdrop, with vigorous growth, has narrow, glaucous leaves and soft honey-scented flowers. 20cm x 15cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

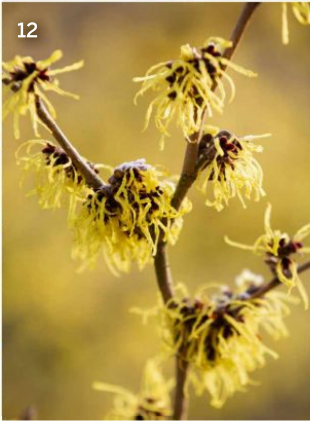
12 *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Pallida'
A spreading, deciduous woodland shrub with broad leaves that turn yellow in autumn, followed by scented, bright-yellow flowers in late winter. 3m x 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

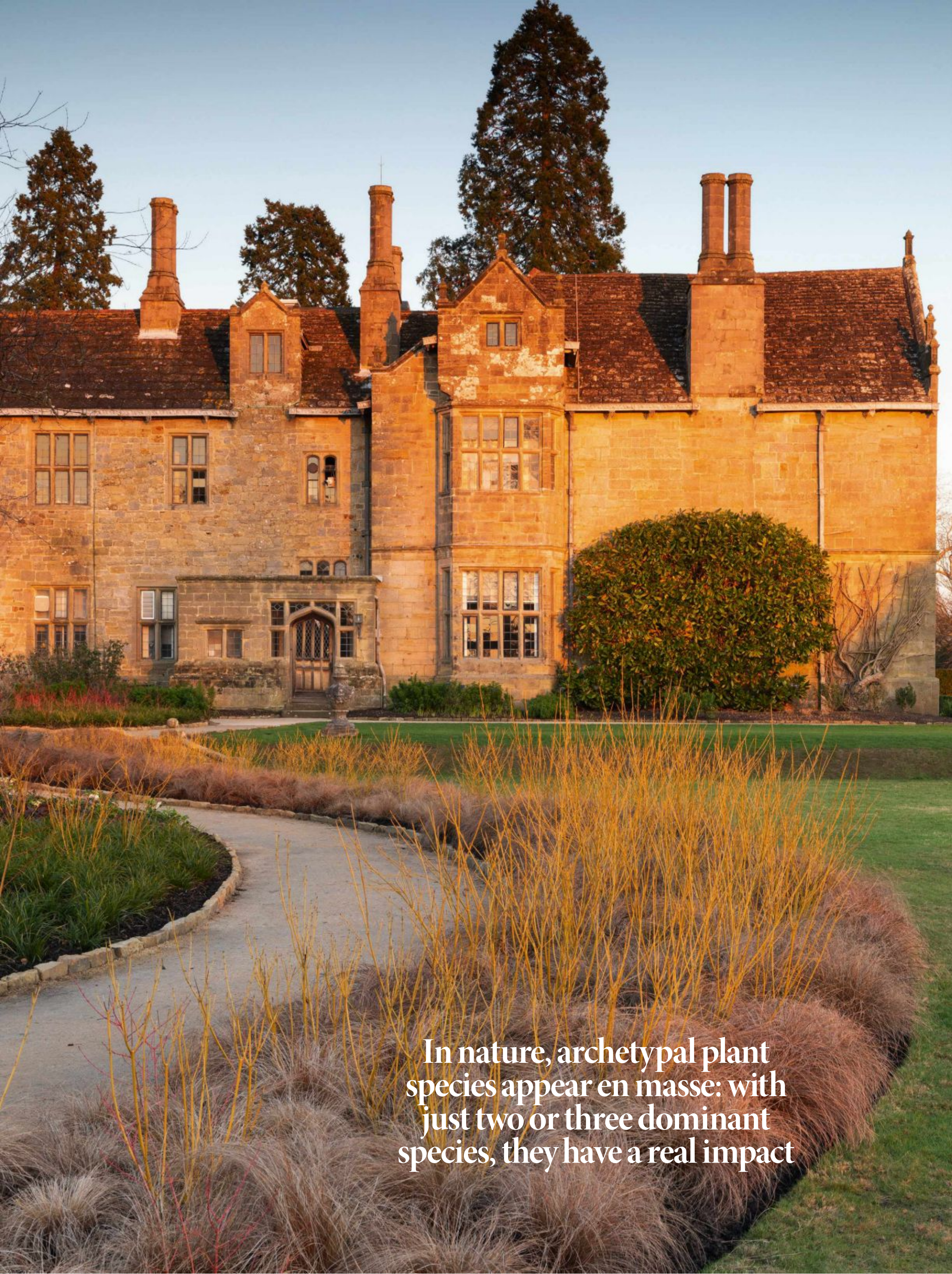
For more key plants turn to page 76



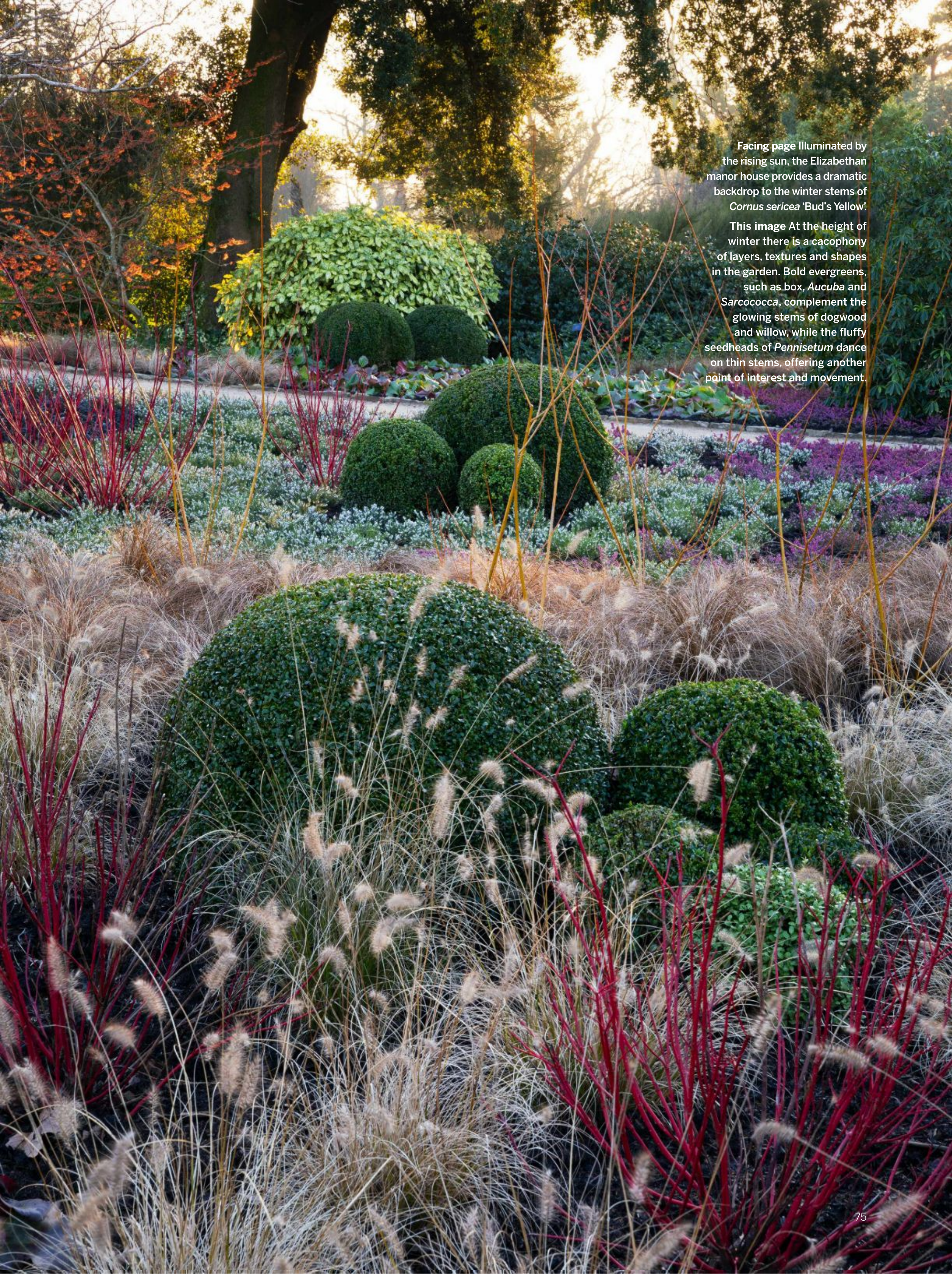






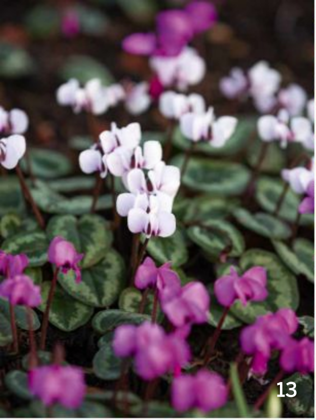


In nature, archetypal plant species appear en masse: with just two or three dominant species, they have a real impact



Facing page Illuminated by the rising sun, the Elizabethan manor house provides a dramatic backdrop to the winter stems of *Cornus sericea* 'Bud's Yellow'.

This image At the height of winter there is a cacophony of layers, textures and shapes in the garden. Bold evergreens, such as box, *Aucuba* and *Sarcococca*, complement the glowing stems of dogwood and willow, while the fluffy seedheads of *Pennisetum* dance on thin stems, offering another point of interest and movement.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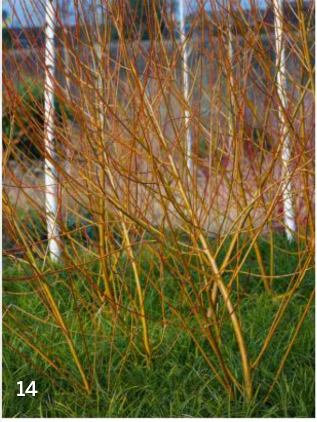
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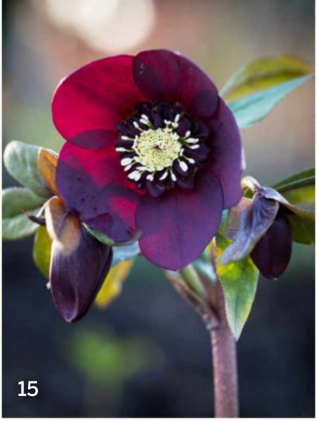
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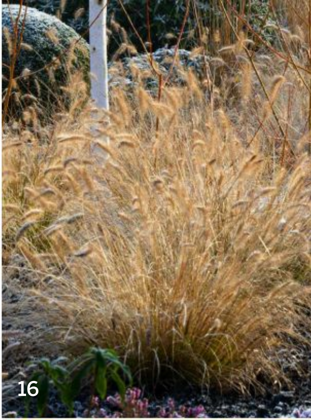
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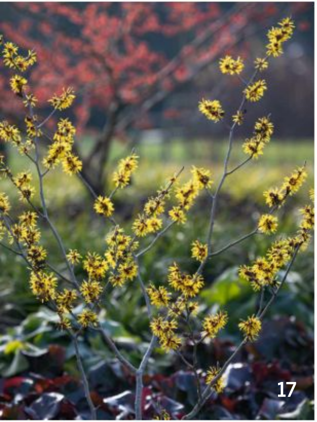
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24 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

13 *Cyclamen coum*
A summer-dormant, bulbous perennial with attractive round leaves that appear through winter and spring, alongside glowing pink and white flowers. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H5.

14 *Salix alba* 'Hutchinson's Yellow Bark'
A deciduous tree often coppiced or stooled to promote young growth. After leaf fall, new stems glow an intense yellow. 10m x 5m. RHS H6.

15 *Helleborus* x *hybridus* 'Red Lady'
Semi-evergreen, leathery palmate leaves throughout the year with nodding, cupped burgundy flowers from late winter into early spring. 40cm x 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

16 *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Little Bunny'
Smaller in stature than the straight species, this perennial, clump-forming grass has fluffy seedheads that endure the worst of the winter weather. 60cm x 60cm. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.

17 *Hamamelis mollis*
A winter-flowering shrub with clusters of scented, yellow flowers conspicuously held on bare stems and golden foliage as leaves fall in the autumn. 4m x 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

18 *Carex morrowii*
A low-growing, evergreen sedge with thin, arching stems of deep green, which form a useful groundcover when grown en masse. 40cm x 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

19 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
Upright, perennial grass that forms a clump of soft foliage followed by iridescent plumes that tighten into buff seedheads, persisting in winter. 1.6m x 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

20 *Aucuba japonica* 'Crotonifolia'
A resilient evergreen that will cope with dry and shade, having large, waxy green leaves that are peppered with pale-yellow marks. 3m x 3m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

21 *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Carmine Red'
A large, spreading, deciduous shrub with leaves that turn vibrant autumnal shades before falling, and lightly scented, coral-red flowers in late winter. 3m x 4m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

22 *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*
An elegant deciduous tree with small leaves and spring catkins, although it's often grown for its striking white bark that glows at dusk. 10m x 6m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-6b.

23 *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Jelena'
A choice, deciduous, woodland shrub with good autumn colour and conspicuous coppery-orange, lightly scented flowers during late winter. 3m x 3m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

24 *Erica* x *darleyensis* 'Rubina'
A decorative, winter-flowering pink form of this sprawling shrub that will spread to form a low, evergreen mound. 40cm x 80cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

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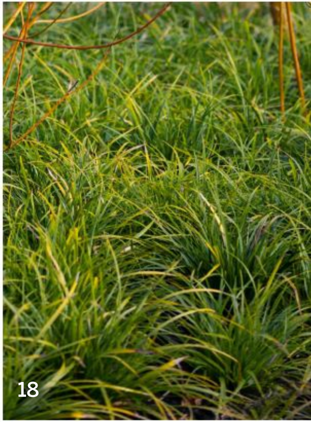
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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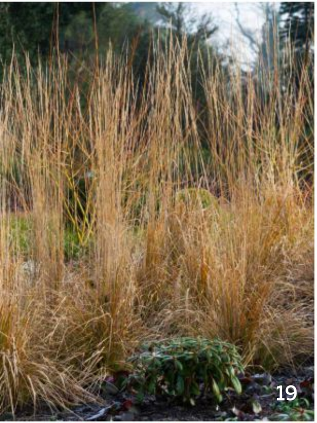
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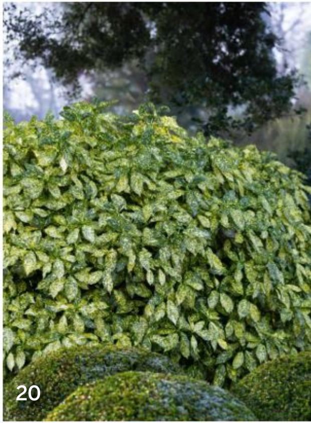
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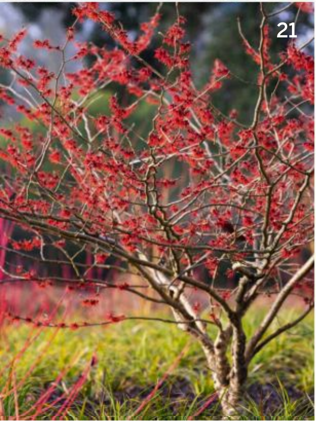
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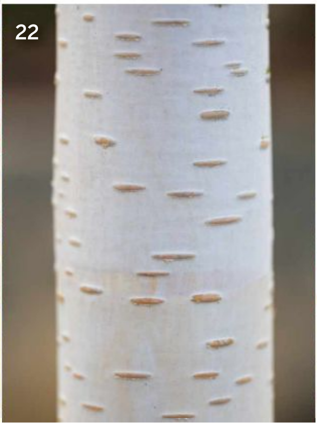
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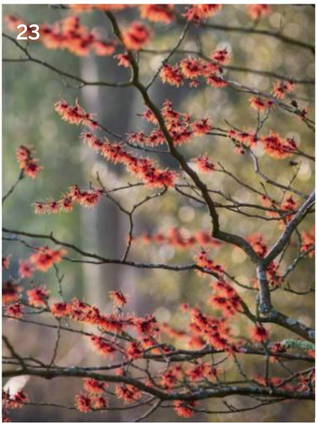
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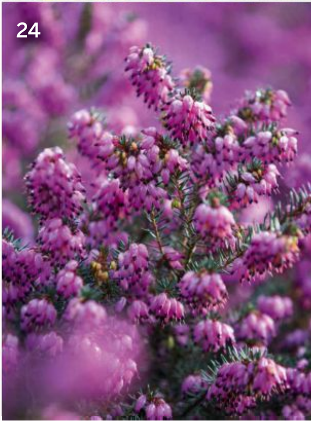
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Above The fluid arrangement of paths and interlocking borders create enticing routes for exploring the garden and draw your eye to the views beyond. Illuminated by the soft morning light, the garden appears a peaceful refuge, which in late afternoon comes vibrantly alive.

▷ include various dogwoods, daphnes and rhododendrons, ornamentally sitting alongside the existing specimens of *Corylopsis pauciflora* and *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Pallida'.

At ground level, bergenias, hellebores and ophiopogons ramble through shadier parts, while *Phlomis russeliana,* ornamental grasses and sedges, and heather occupy the sunnier spots, the latter giving a gentle nod towards the heathlands of the Sussex High Weald. "It's about creating simple yet striking combinations," explains Francis, while looking at a colourful sandwich of *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Feuerzauber', *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire' and *Carex morrowii*. A slight turn of the head sees a river of striking *Erica* x *darleyensis* 'Mediterranean Pink' dramatically bleeding into the brilliant, pure-white form. "Combining strong or opposite colours, such as red and green, makes the display really pop, though you have to be careful it doesn't look too contrived."

Adding bands of deciduous grasses, with their dried buff foliage and wild-looking seedheads, can help to diffuse and naturalise anything that looks too artificial. Delivering such a bold design of colour requires restraint, an amazing discipline on Francis's part in limiting plants to just 46 taxa, spread over the 33,000 plants that were used to bring the design to life. After planting, the garden was initially mulched with composted bracken to aid establishment, reduce weed colonisation and protect the soil. Long term, Francis intends to use groundcover to achieve this. "Mulches can often look unsightly during winter and drain the colour from ornamental stems," he explains.

Now in its fourth year, the garden feels as though it is establishing well. Groundcover species mesh together below an abundance of vibrant stems that appear dramatically after leaf fall. Late winter and early spring bulbs have been interplanted to enrich the display further, with large clumps of the beautiful *Crocus* 'Ard Schenk' looking skywards, as amiable *Cyclamen coum* decorate the base of trees. A selection of snowdrops add charm, in particular *Galanthus woronowii* with its verdant green foliage, hinting that winter is almost over. Looking forward, the future of Wakehurst and its Winter Garden appears dazzlingly bright, even on the dullest days of winter. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Selsfield Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6TN. **Tel** 01444 894066. **Web** kew.org/wakehurst **Open** Daily, except 24-25 December, 10am-4.30pm (10am-6pm, March to October).

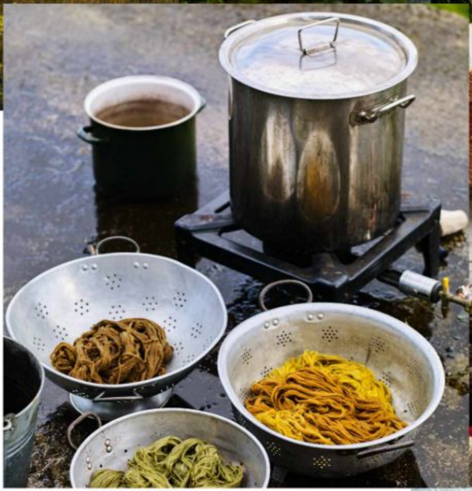
True colours

Weaver Zoë Ritchie uses the ancient art of dyeing with plants to create one-off colours for her hand-woven textiles, inspired by the changing seasons of the Scottish landscape that surrounds her garden

WORDS **ROSANNA MORRIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

Facing page Shelves of beautiful wool ready to be woven. The colours are achieved by artichoke and bog myrtle (greens), bracken and gall (creams), meadowsweet and goldenrod (green-yellows) and indigo (blues), on its own or dipped in heather or bog myrtle.

This image Zoë digs up roots to use from her garden as it begins its winter senesce.



This page: clockwise from above Views out to the Inner Hebrides from Zoë's garden on the west coast of Scotland. This wild, romantic spot is the base from where she strikes out on foraging forays to find the materials to make her dyes.

Zoë collects dahlias from her garden to dry, ready for using to create her natural dyes.

A selection of dyed yarns draining in colanders. The brown is made by bramble root, the green from nettle and the yellow from bog myrtle.

Facing page Zoë's light-filled studio is packed to the rafters with her own-dyed spools of wool.

In a garden on the untamed west coast of Scotland, where the weather can change in a trice, grows *Rubia tinctorum*, common madder, a plant native to the Mediterranean. "It's quite a thing, growing madder in Scotland," says Zoë Ritchie. "You need the weather for it. I've had my first crop, though."

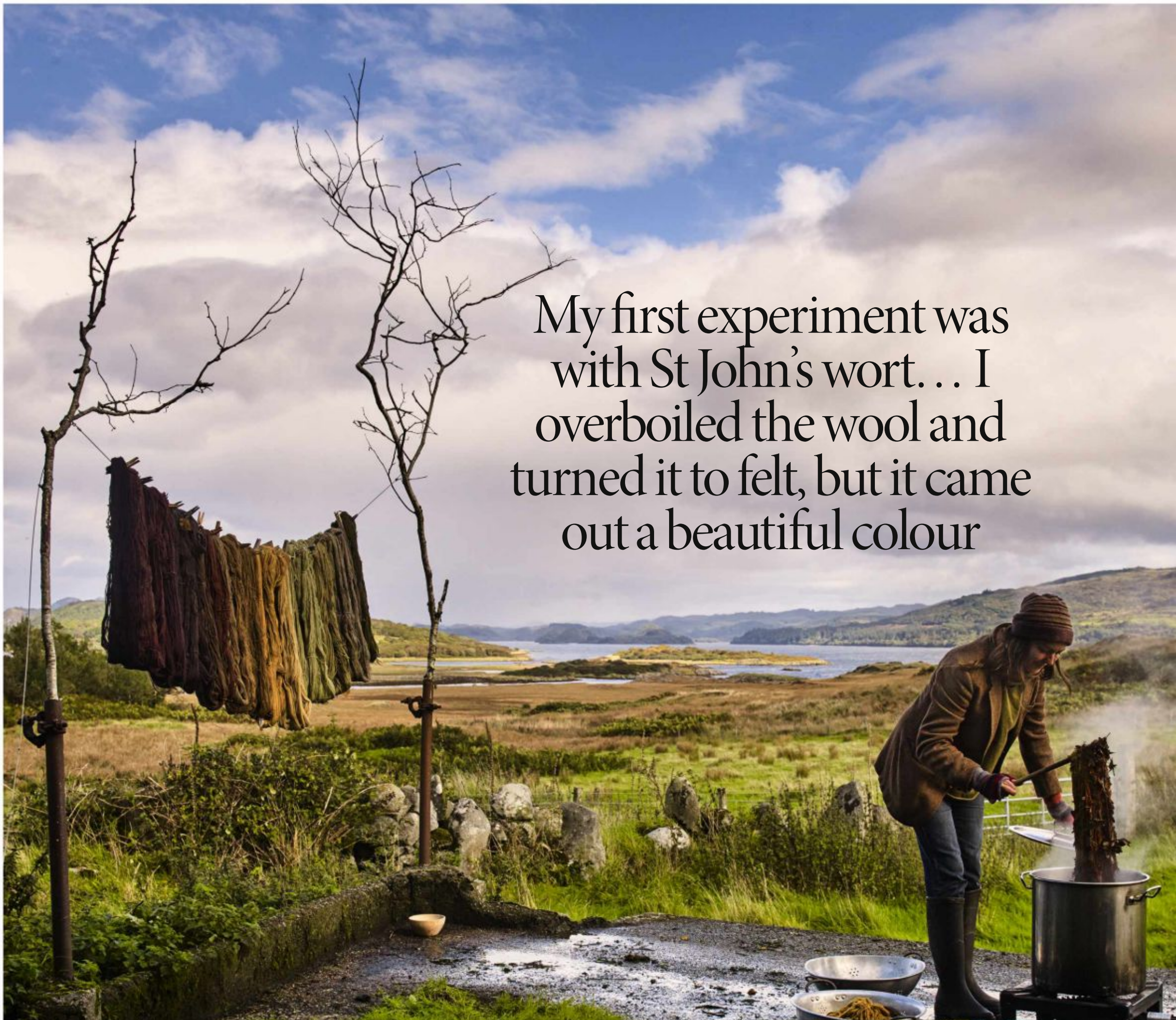
Madder has been cultivated for centuries for the rich red dye that can be obtained from its roots. Zoë, a weaver, is waiting patiently to extract the crimson pigment from the roots of her madder plant. "It takes three years for the roots to establish for dyeing," she says.

Over the past ten years, Zoë has been dyeing wool for her woven scarves and shawls with plants from her garden, using everything from bronze fennel and sage to dahlias and rhubarb. She has also been gathering flowers, leaves, bark and roots from the surrounding hills and the woods. Roots of gunnera, iris and dock, oak bark, tansy, lichen, horsetail, gorse, bog myrtle and heather – all yield dyes of some sort. "I'm always on the scrounge. In the winter, the only fresh materials are gorse and bramble roots, so I use dried plants. Some plants, such as nettles, I prefer to use fresh. They produce a really good colour green that I particularly like."

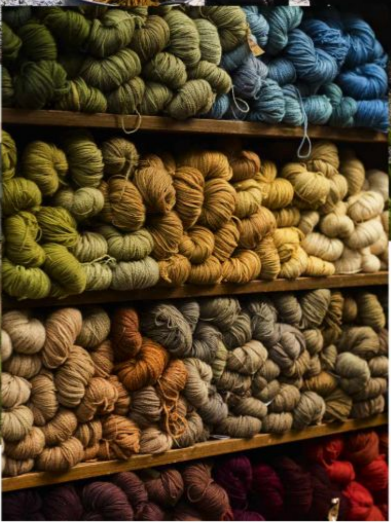
A self-taught weaver who learned from books on "a tiny, rusty, rickety old table loom" salvaged from a closed-down school, Zoë did not like the bright colours of the wool sold in shops. So she went on a dyeing workshop to acquire the skills to make colours herself. But she did not like the idea of using synthetic dyes, either. "I knew I wanted to use plants because I love gardening," she says. She again turned to books to teach herself how to dye with plants.

Since ancient times, plants have been used to dye textiles but they were superseded in the mid-19th century when technological and chemical developments heralded the use of ▷

Roots of gunnera, iris and dock, oak bark, tansy, lichen, horsetail, gorse, bog myrtle and heather – all yield dyes of some sort



My first experiment was with St John's wort… I overboiled the wool and turned it to felt, but it came out a beautiful colour



This page: clockwise from above

Freshly dyed hanks of wool left to dry on a washing line reveal how the colours Zoë produces reflect the tones of the land around her.

A spectrum of colours produced by natural dyes, including, from left, madder/cochineal, purple-loosestrife, lungwort/madder, nettle, meadowsweet, sage, comfrey and bronze fennel.

Zoë carries a harvest of bronze fennel to her studio.

This page: clockwise from top left

Dried dahlias from Zoë's garden ready to be used in her natural dyes.

Zoë working on her Ashford Jack loom. She also uses a warping loom, which enables her to design the colour and determine the length of the weave before it goes on to the loom.

A beautiful scarf and a shawl by Zoë. The shawl colours are from indigo, bog myrtle and nettle, while the scarf is made of wools dyed with heather/indigo, logwood, dahlia and meadowsweet. She is currently working on a collaboration with her friend, the fine silversmith Lucy Jane Walsh, to add pieces of silver designed to look like lichen to a scarf.

▷ synthetic dyes made using coal tar. But much like William Morris, who in the 19th century lamented the destruction of the art of dyeing, many people believe natural dyes derived from plants are greener, healthier and more beautiful.

For Zoë, it's the intimate interconnectedness of plants. "The thing I love about plants is that you can eat them, you can dye with them and you can also use them for medicinal purposes," she says. "I love connecting all these elements. I love the folklore and the witchiness of using them. I dye with rhubarb leaves, artichoke leaves, and marjoram. Comfrey, which can be made into a natural fertiliser, is also known as knitbone, as it was once used to heal broken bones."

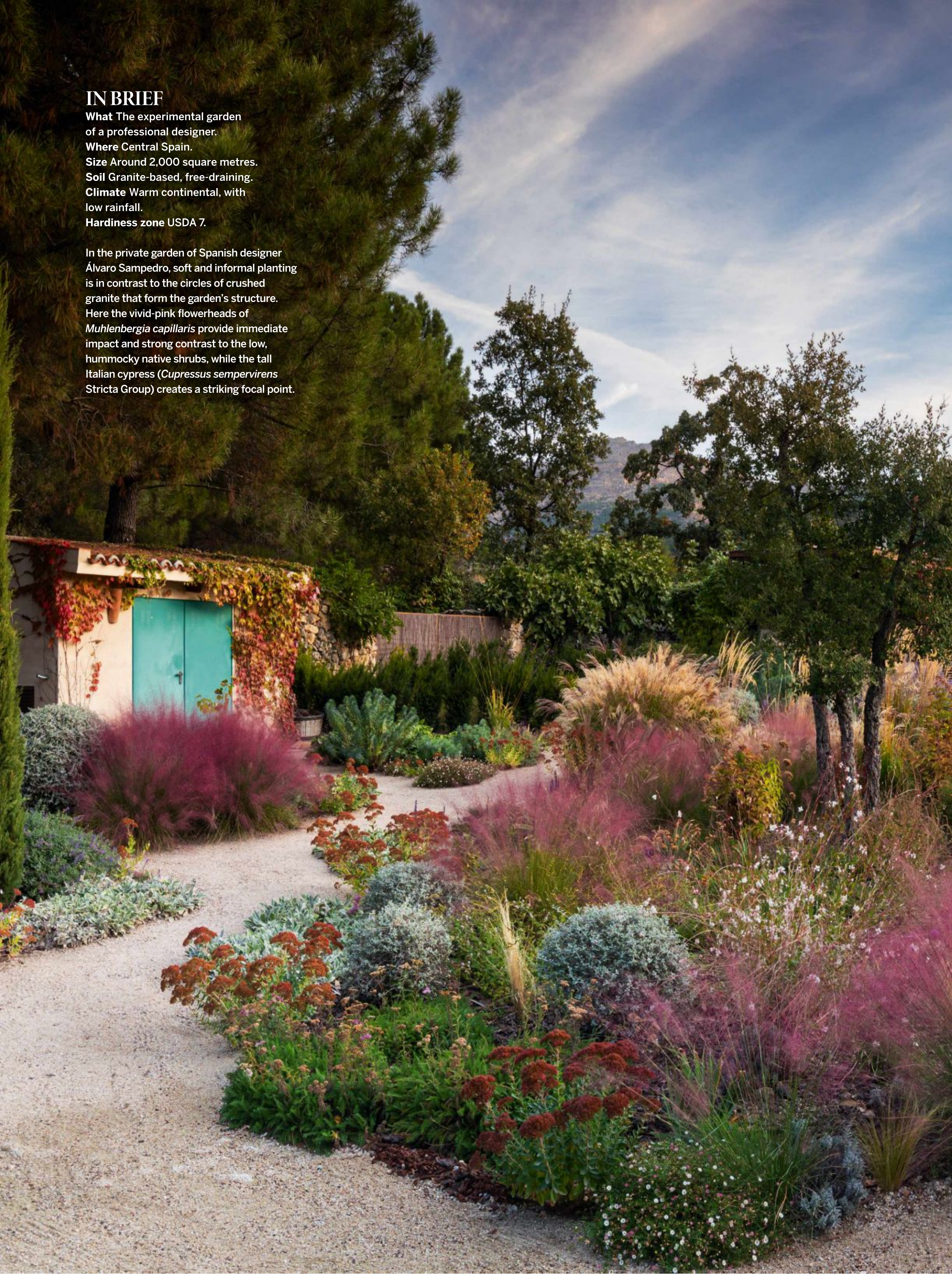
To find what colours worked, Zoë tested plants on her kitchen hob. "My first experiment was with St John's wort. I was too scared to pick plants at first so I ordered it. It was a complete disaster. I overboiled the wool and turned it to felt, but it came out a beautiful colour." She tried more and learned as she went. "Bracken is so poisonous, you have to boil it outdoors."

The results are earthy, rich and reflect the landscape of Argyll, changing with the seasons. Zoë begins by washing the wool to get the lanolin out. She then simmers the hanks in a mordant, a metallic compound that is either alum, iron or copper, which fixes the dye to the wool. The process of making the dye can be slightly different for each plant, but it mostly comprises soaking and boiling the plant pickings for anything from an hour to a day, depending on the plant (roots may need soaking for several weeks), straining and cooling the liquid, adding the mordanted yarn and gradually heating it again. She then leaves it to cool overnight. The next day she rinses and washes the wool and hangs it on a line to dry. Once dry, the wool can be used for weaving. "There are so many plants that are surprising. Reed for example," says Zoë. "With reed and alum, the wool comes out a fluorescent yellow; with copper it is a beautiful muddy green; and with iron it comes out brown. They're all so individual. Every single one is so beautiful. Dahlias are so wonderful to dye with. And blackberry root. It always comes out dark brown with a purple tinge to it."

There's one plant Zoë can't grow or forage: warmth-loving indigo. But that won't stop her from working around this small technicality. "I'm trying to grow woad to use instead." ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

To find out more about Zoë's work, visit **zoeritchieweaving.co.uk**



IN BRIEF

What The experimental garden of a professional designer.
Where Central Spain.
Size Around 2,000 square metres.
Soil Granite-based, free-draining.
Climate Warm continental, with low rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 7.

In the private garden of Spanish designer Álvaro Sampedro, soft and informal planting is in contrast to the circles of crushed granite that form the garden's structure. Here the vivid-pink flowerheads of *Muhlenbergia capillaris* provide immediate impact and strong contrast to the low, hummocky native shrubs, while the tall Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* Stricta Group) creates a striking focal point.

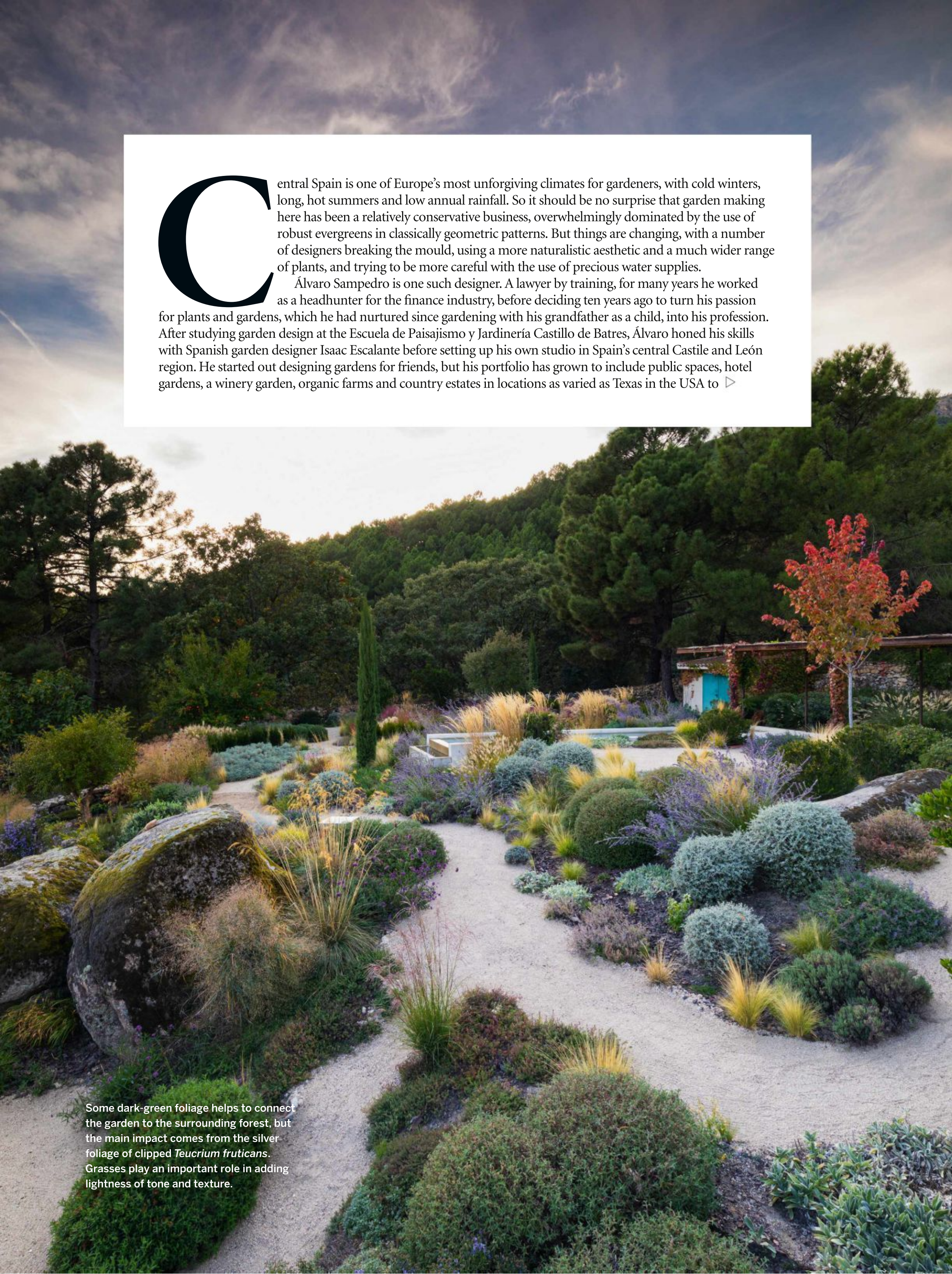
RETURN OF THE NATIVE

In his own experimental garden, Spanish designer Álvaro Sampedro trials many of the native Iberian species that are transforming notions of design in his country

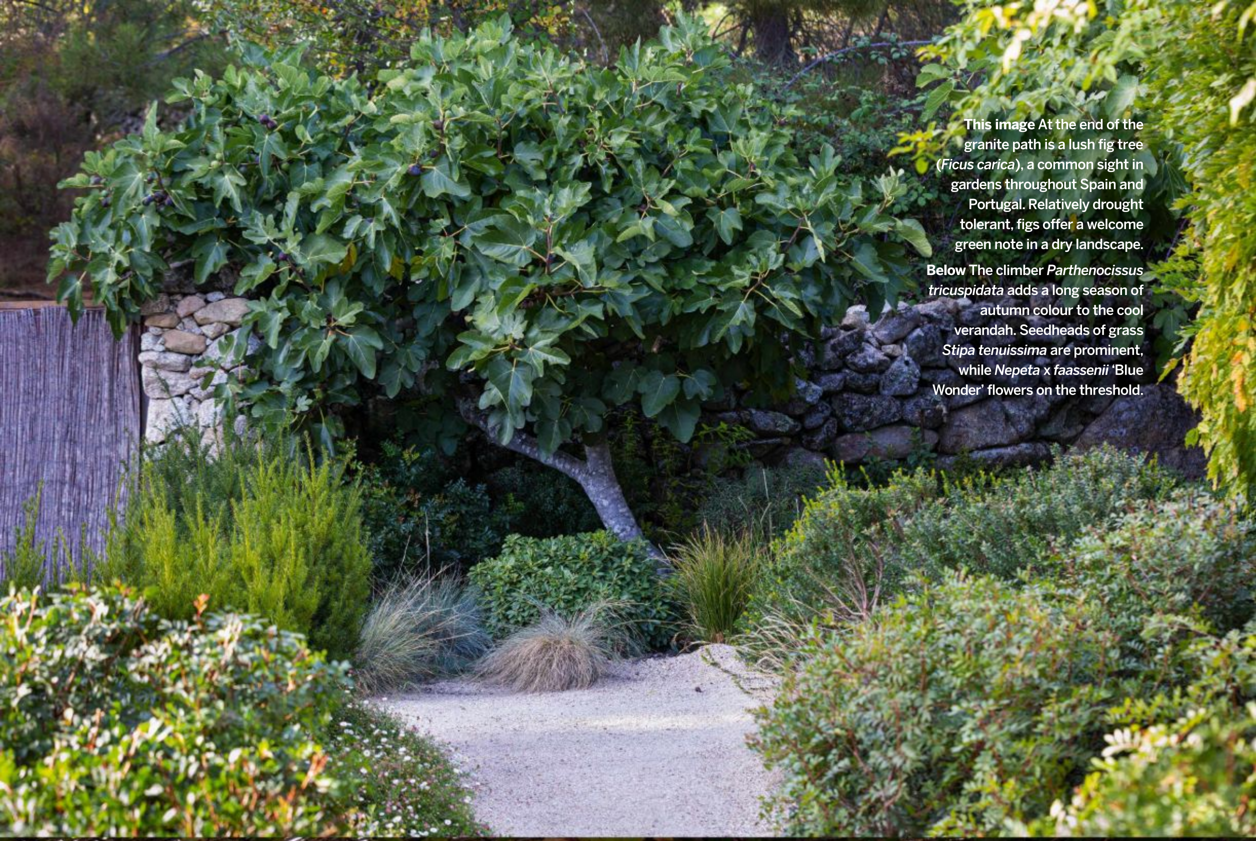
WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY
PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

Central Spain is one of Europe's most unforgiving climates for gardeners, with cold winters, long, hot summers and low annual rainfall. So it should be no surprise that garden making here has been a relatively conservative business, overwhelmingly dominated by the use of robust evergreens in classically geometric patterns. But things are changing, with a number of designers breaking the mould, using a more naturalistic aesthetic and a much wider range of plants, and trying to be more careful with the use of precious water supplies.

Álvaro Sampedro is one such designer. A lawyer by training, for many years he worked as a headhunter for the finance industry, before deciding ten years ago to turn his passion for plants and gardens, which he had nurtured since gardening with his grandfather as a child, into his profession. After studying garden design at the Escuela de Paisajismo y Jardinería Castillo de Batres, Álvaro honed his skills with Spanish garden designer Isaac Escalante before setting up his own studio in Spain's central Castile and León region. He started out designing gardens for friends, but his portfolio has grown to include public spaces, hotel gardens, a winery garden, organic farms and country estates in locations as varied as Texas in the USA to ▷

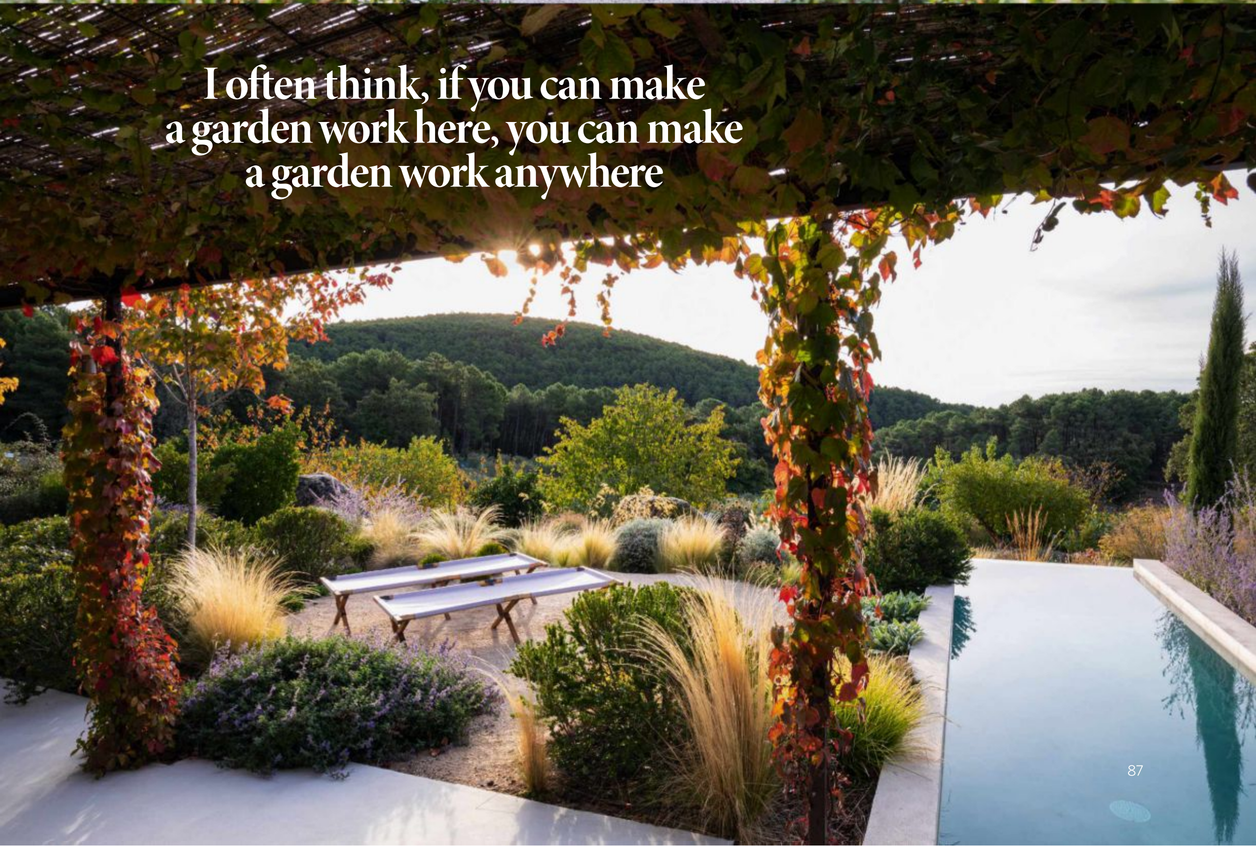


Some dark-green foliage helps to connect the garden to the surrounding forest, but the main impact comes from the silver foliage of clipped *Teucrium fruticans*. Grasses play an important role in adding lightness of tone and texture.



This image At the end of the granite path is a lush fig tree (*Ficus carica*), a common sight in gardens throughout Spain and Portugal. Relatively drought tolerant, figs offer a welcome green note in a dry landscape.

Below The climber *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* adds a long season of autumn colour to the cool verandah. Seedheads of grass *Stipa tenuissima* are prominent, while *Nepeta* x *faassenii* 'Blue Wonder' flowers on the threshold.

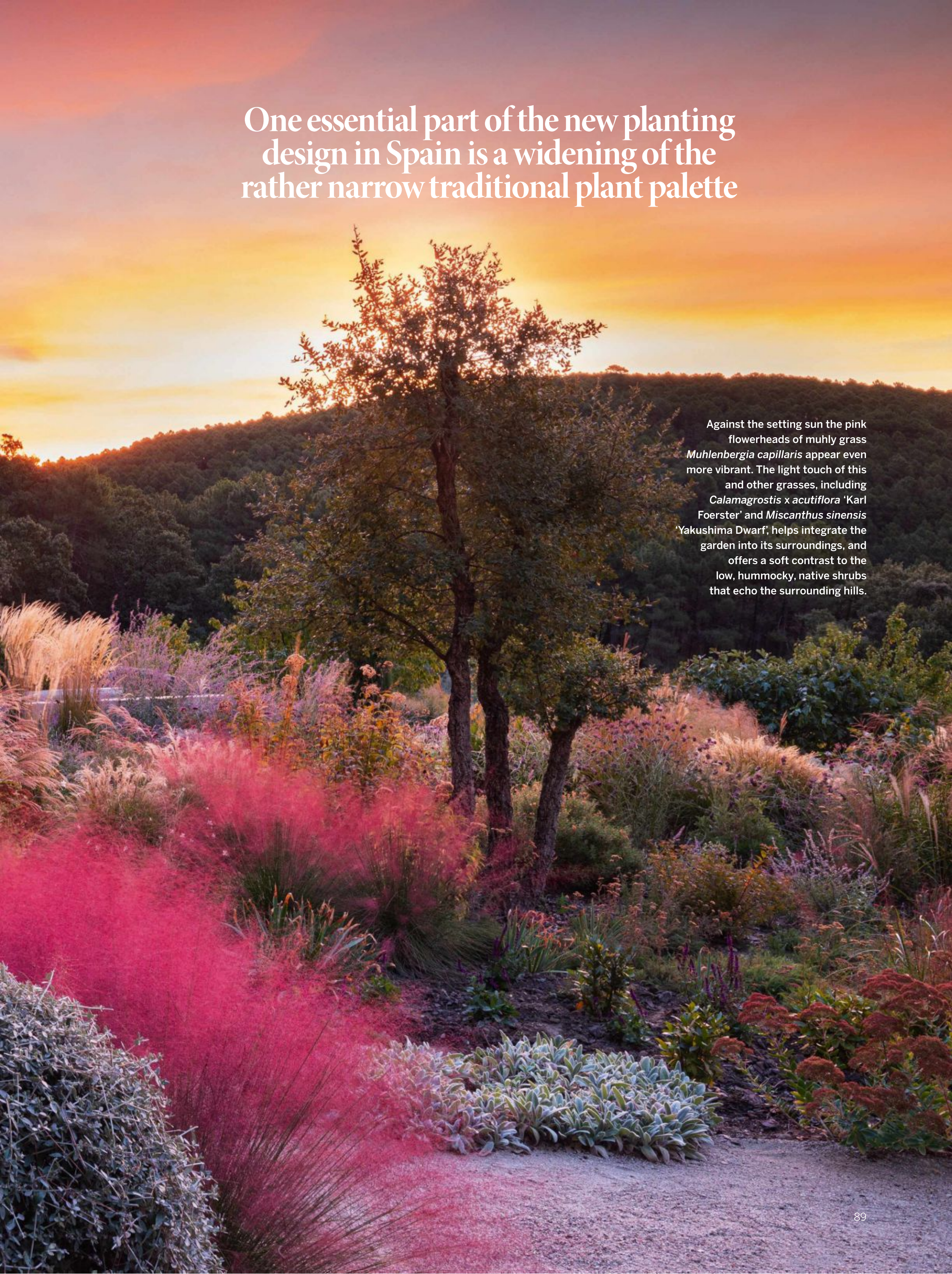


I often think, if you can make a garden work here, you can make a garden work anywhere

▷ Switzerland and Portugal, but the bulk of his work remains creating private gardens in his native Spain. "I often think, if you can make a garden work here, you can make a garden work anywhere," he says.

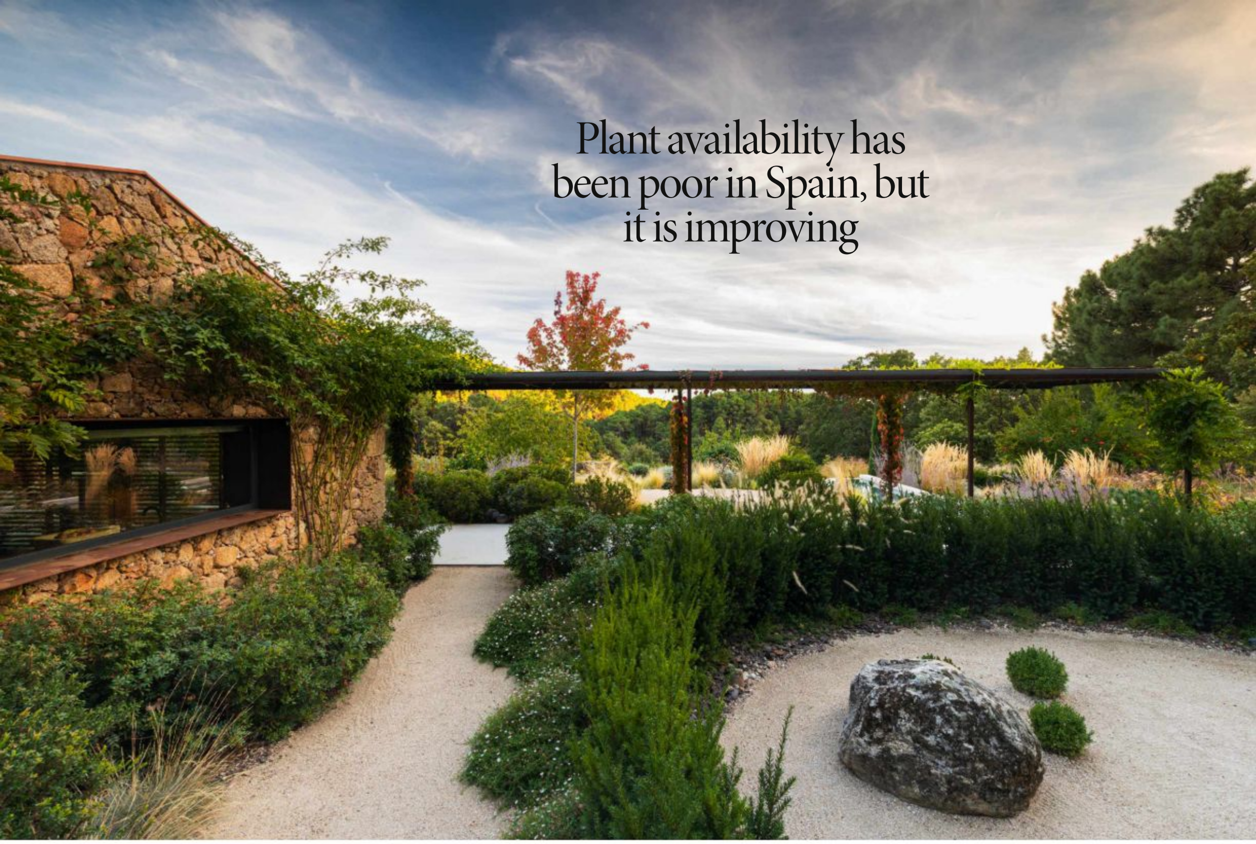
Álvaro's own garden in the Tiétar Valley, southwest of Madrid, works wonderfully. Built on the site of an ancient orchard that started out with what Álvaro describes as "bad soil and too many rocks", the garden is made up of seven circles of crushed granite, surrounded by planting in an informal and relaxed style. Now four years old, with many of those rocks moved and much-improved new soil added, the planting demonstrates the design style Álvaro is making his own, using mostly native Iberian species.

As well as serving as a show garden for Álvaro's innovative approach, this is also a test garden where he experiments with plants before introducing them into his clients' gardens, working out how much irrigation they need, as well as mixing textures, colours and flowering times. One essential part of the new planting ▷



One essential part of the new planting design in Spain is a widening of the rather narrow traditional plant palette

Against the setting sun the pink flowerheads of muhly grass *Muhlenbergia capillaris* appear even more vibrant. The light touch of this and other grasses, including *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Yakushima Dwarf', helps integrate the garden into its surroundings, and offers a soft contrast to the low, hummocky, native shrubs that echo the surrounding hills.



> Plant availability has been poor in Spain, but it is improving

▷ design style in Spain and Portugal is a widening of the rather narrow traditional plant palette. "Plant availability has been poor in Spain," says Álvaro, "but it is improving." Many of the plants Álvaro currently uses are sourced from the Portuguese nursery Sigmetum, which specialises in drought-tolerant Iberian natives and meticulously documents the sources of its propagating material.

Among the native species Álvaro likes to use is *Pistacia lentiscus*, a tough shrub with divided foliage that offers an attractive level of diversity in leaf shape and size between plants, and, unlike many Mediterranean shrubs, grows back after hard pruning. Other favourites include *Armeria pungens*, a larger version of the familiar thrift and *Thymus pulegioides,* a spreading broad-leaved thyme. Álvaro emphasises the low, hummocky forms of these Mediterranean shrubs through occasional pruning, a practice that imitates the nibbling of goats, characteristic of many local habitats. Pruning also helps lengthen the lifespan of many species and reduces competition.

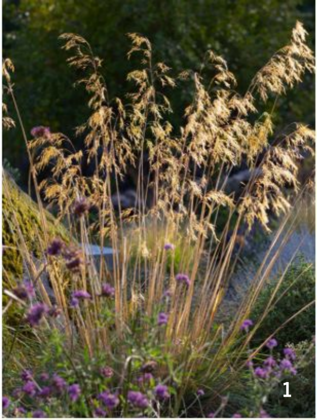
Not all of the plants Álvaro uses are Mediterranean natives. Many of the grasses that offer a highly effective contrast to the shrubs and "bring movement and different colours to the garden" are North American, including the vivid-pink *Muhlenbergia capillaris, Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal' – "I like to think it's named for the movement that the seeds make in the wind, which is like watching the equaliser of a heavy metal soundtrack," says Álvaro.

Eventually, Álvaro intends to use the garden to illustrate talks about landscaping and to teach gardeners how to maintain this kind of perennial garden. "For me, 80 per cent of the success of a garden is the post-installation maintenance," he says – he already supplies clients with a manual on how to look after the plants. He also likes to be involved with the gardens for several years after completion and in training maintenance staff. Crucial to his approach is planting small, so that root systems can penetrate the soil deeply early on, even if some clients find it difficult. "At first, with the little plants, they are confused," says Álvaro. "The next spring they start to become happier, and by the third spring they say how their lives are better because of the garden." Álvaro's obvious pleasure in his own garden is clearly shared by the bees and butterflies that buzz among the flowers, enjoying the native plants that link it firmly in its environment. □

Above A developing yew hedge delineates one of the seven circles of gravel that are at the heart of the garden's design. *Erigeron karvinskianus* is spreading just outside it. The boulder is one of many that dot this granite-defined landscape; including them in the design not only provides a continuity with the surroundings, but is also a pragmatic decision as they are extremely heavy to move.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Álvaro's work at **alvarosampedro.com/en**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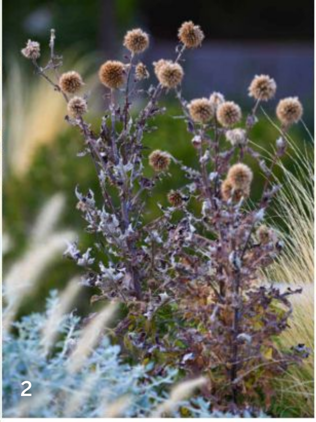
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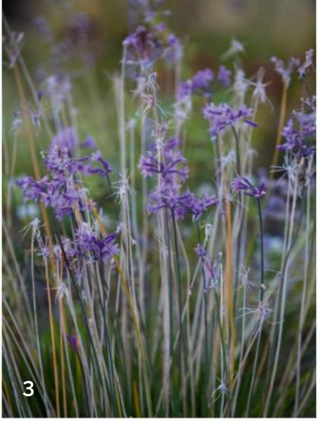
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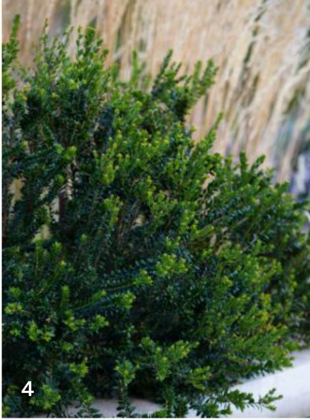
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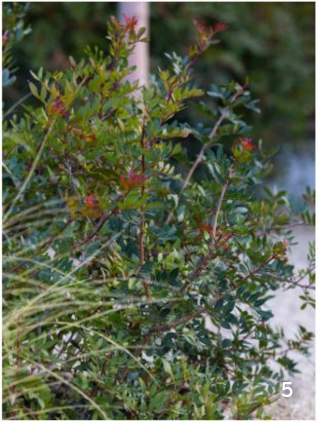
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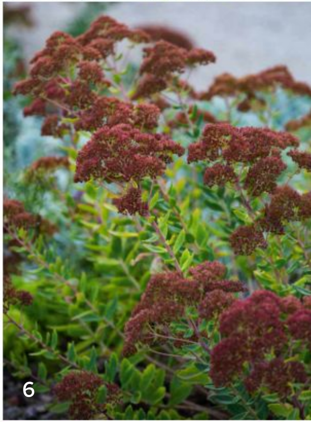
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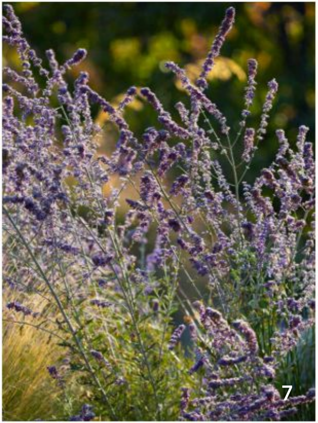
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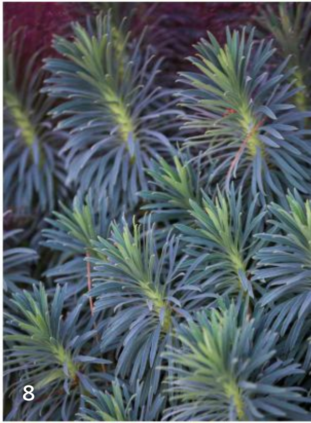
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Stipa gigantea*
Although this amazingly easy, non-spreading grass can reach over two metres in flower, its evergreen foliage reaches only 60cm. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b†.

2 *Echinops ritro*
A drought-tolerant perennial that offers attractive seedheads, and early thistle-like foliage. Can sometimes self-seed. 90cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Tulbaghia violacea*
Society garlic offers attractive, slowly spreading clumps of linear foliage and a long summer flowering season. 60cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

4 *Myrtus communis* subsp. *tarentina*
Often kept clipped and used as a substitute for box in hotter and drier climates, this Mediterranean shrub has attractively aromatic foliage. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

5 *Pistacia lentiscus*
One of the best native shrubs, used by many new Spanish designers. Easily kept small through pruning, it offers attractive foliage that is often reddish in spring. 2m. RHS H3.

6 *Hylotelephium telephium*
Late-flowering perennial with slowly expanding clumps of fleshy leaves. It is also noted as a good pollinator plant. 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

7 *Salvia yangii*
Previously known as *Perovskia atriplicifolia*, this long-lived and extremely tough shrub is usually pruned annually to perform like a perennial. 1.2m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

8 *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*
A short-lived but seeding perennial particularly useful in dry shade. Offers grey-green leaves and large, rounded heads of yellow-green flowers in early spring. 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

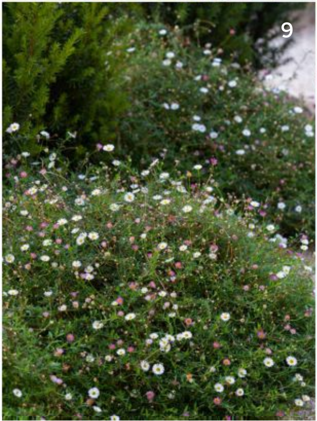
9 *Erigeron karvinskianus*
Short-lived and self-seeding, this small daisy-like flower can insinuate itself into a variety of small spaces. Offers a long summer flowering period. 30cm. AGM. RHS H5.

10 *Muhlenbergia capillaris*
Stunning when in flower with its vivid-pink flowerheads, this clump-forming grass thrives only in hot summer climates. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Teucrium fruticans*
A classic Mediterranean shrub that can grow up to 2m, but is often clipped. It has blue flowers in spring, but the main feature is its evergreen, silver foliage. 2m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

12 *Arbutus unedo*
The strawberry tree is an extraordinarily resilient evergreen tree. Usually seen as a shrub, it offers red fruit and white flowers that appear together in autumn. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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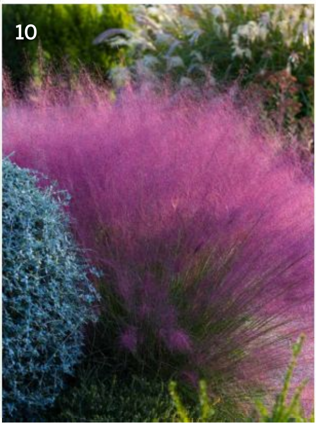
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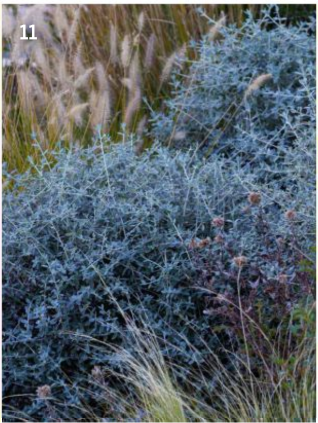
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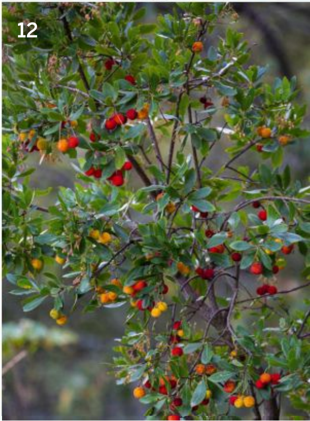
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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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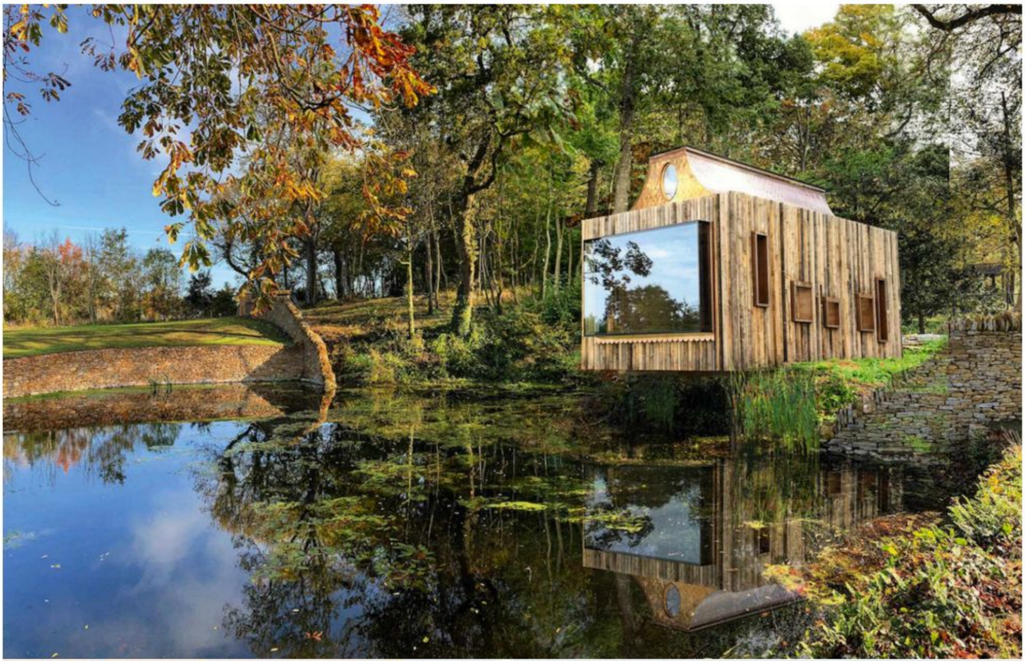

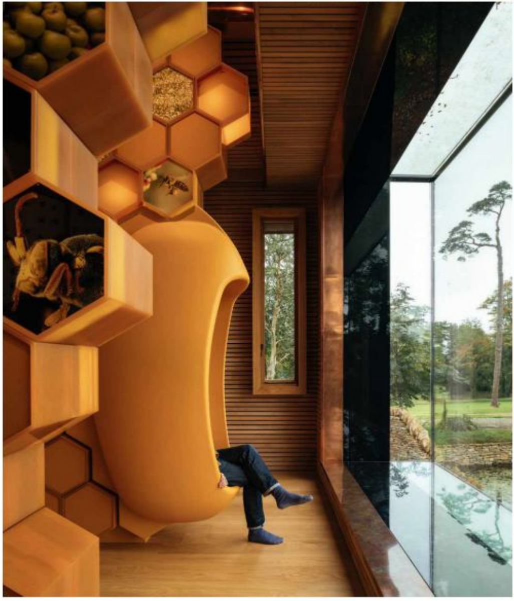

BUZZING NEW HUB

Constructed on a former landfill site, a new apiary building in the style of a folly has been installed beside a lake at The Newt in Somerset. Designed by Invisible Studio, in collaboration with beekeeper Paula Carnell, the Beezantium includes habitats for wild bees, solitary bees and other species. The timber-clad building, which has a curved roof covered in copper shingles and a picture window overlooking the water, also houses an interactive exhibition about the cultural and natural history of bees. Visits to the Beezantium are included in entry to The Newt's gardens, but must be pre-booked. **invisiblestudio.org**; **thenewtinsomerset.com**

PIERS TAYLOR, JIM STEPHENSON.

News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

① APLD AWARDS

UK designers Gavin McWilliam and Andrew Wilson have won gold and Best of Show in the APLD International Landscape Design Awards 2021. Their design for a family garden in Hertfordshire also won Best Large Residential Garden at the recent SGD Awards 2021. The garden, which surrounds a contemporary home, leads from a concrete terrace to expansive areas of lawn, framed by meadow planting and clipped *Prunus lusitanica* hedging, while an avenue of table-topped *Liquidambar* adds structure. Two specimen acers have been retained to add a sense of maturity to the scheme. **mcwilliamstudio.com**

② CITY QUAYS GARDENS

Plans for City Quays Gardens, a new public garden at Belfast Harbour, have been revealed. The scheme, drawn up by the Turley consultancy, includes open lawns suitable for events, and a glade garden, made up of multi-stem and clear-stem trees, and woodland-edge bulb and perennial planting. Plans also include a coastal garden with a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees alongside drought-tolerant grasses and perennials. A series of feature seats and benches will tell the story of Belfast Harbour and will mark the start of a City Quays Heritage Trail. **cqgardens.co.uk**

③ GREENING MAYFAIR

Designer Alexandra Noble has created an installation of pillar-box-red planters for North Audley Street in Mayfair, central London. Part of a masterplan, by design studio Publica, to transform Mayfair and Belgravia for the Grosvenor Estate, the planters also define dining spaces on widened footpaths. The planters are filled with drought-tolerant plants, mainly ornamental grasses and evergreens, interspersed with long-flowering perennials and annuals, most of which support pollinators. Trees such as *Arbutus unedo*, *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple' and *Crataegus coccinea* provide vertical accents. **alexandranoble.com**

④ SGD AWARDS

The Grand Award at the SGD's ninth annual awards went to Sara Jane Rothwell for a sloping garden in London, in which she has created a series of terraces that lead up to a woodland glade, where trees screen a gym and studio. At the same awards Kristina Clode was presented with the Judges' Award, and the Design for the Environment Award for a sensory garden (shown) at Sedlescombe Primary School, East Sussex. The existing grassy site around a *Salix babylonica* was transformed into a garden with year-round planting where plants have survived with minimal maintenance. **sgd.org.uk**

⑤ VIADUCT PARK

Concept designs to transform Manchester's Grade II-listed Castlefield Viaduct into a green oasis have been revealed. In plans drawn up for the National Trust by Twelve Architects and Masterplanners, the disused, 330m-long viaduct will become a linear park similar to New York's High Line. A pilot scheme will test elements of the design, including planters, a welcome kiosk, café and a temporary event building, and will encourage input from local people. Proposals to open the viaduct as a temporary park in summer 2022 have been submitted to the council. **twelvearchitects.com**

⑥ SKY GARDEN

Jinny Blom has created a restorative indoor Sky Garden for patients and staff at London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. Situated on the hospital's top floor next to the Adult Intensive Care Unit, the garden offers a number of different zones, including quiet areas, a sociable space, and a physiotherapy ramp. The spaces are separated by bronzed steel screens with lino inserts, and by planters filled with shrubs and perennials, including *Muehlenbeckia*, *Liriope*, *Ficus lyrata* and *Colocasia*. The garden also includes an area for sleeping pods, funded by NHS Charities Together, for on-duty medical staff. **jinnyblom.com**

1 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 3 EVA NEMETH; 4 ABIGAIL REX; 5 TWELVE ARCHITECTS; 6 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER.

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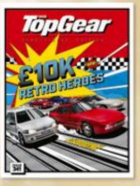

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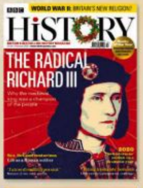

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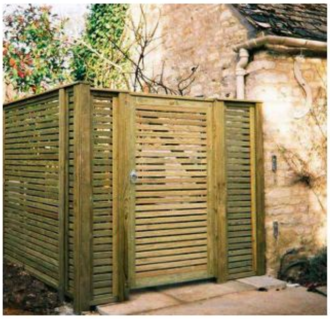
SOURCEBOOK

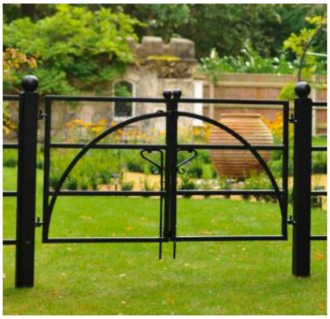
Garden gates

Make an entrance with one of these eye-catching garden gates

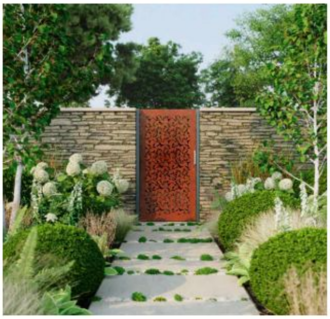
COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE



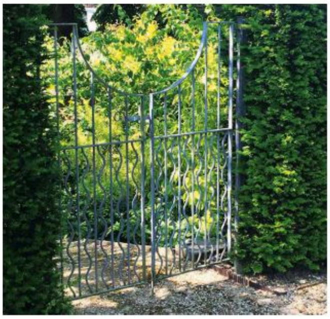
LIGHT PRIVACY
Wooden Venetian Gate,
£223.20, Jacksons Fencing,
0800 408 2234, jacksons-fencing.com



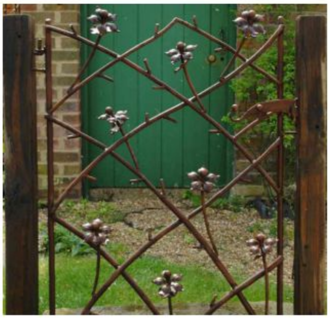
GRAND DESIGN
Estate Fence Gate – Arc Design,
from £949, Harrod Horticultural,
0333 400 1444, harrodhorticultural.com



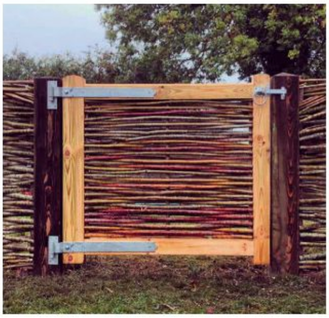
AGES WELL
Branches Pattern Pedestrian Gate, Corten steel
from £943.86, Stark & Greensmith,
01737 701088, starkandgreensmith.com



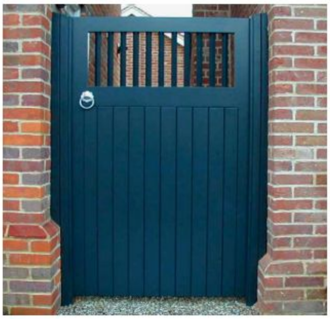
TIMELESS CHARM
Bespoke Double Steel Garden Gate,
from £1,500, Garden Requisites,
01225 851577, garden-requisites.co.uk



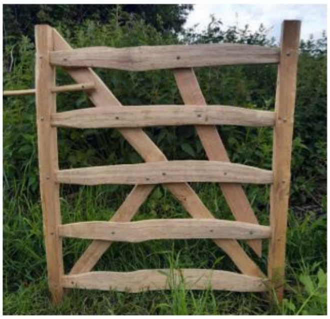
FLORAL FLAIR
Rusted Flower Gate,
from £1,150, Secret Gardens Furniture,
020 8464 5327, secretgardensfurniture.com



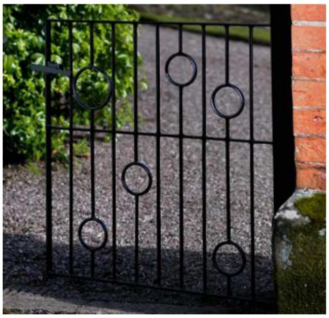
NATURALLY APPEALING
The Oxford Gate, oak and woven willow,
£360, WonderWood,
wonderwoodwillow.com



SOLID STYLE
Bespoke Painted Solid Gate with Spindle Top,
from £2,250, The Garden Trellis Co,
01255 688361, gardentrellis.co.uk



RUSTIC CHIC
Classic Five Bar Pedestrian Gate, oak,
from £366, The Cleft Wood Company,
07813 760763, cleftwood.com



GOOD ALL-ROUNDER
Picasso Metal Garden Gate,
from £140.40, Cannock Gates,
01543 462500, cannockgates.co.uk

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While you don't need a specific wine cellar or wine fridge, here are five simple tips to ensure your wine stays in perfect condition.

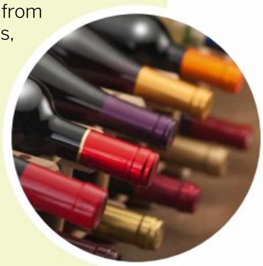
1 Wine doesn't like to be too hot or too cold, so never store below freezing or above 20°C. Consistency is also key, so avoid fluctuations in temperature.

2 Store wine with a cork on its side, so the cork stays moist.

3 Wine likes the dark, as light can destroy its flavours and aromas, so put it in a dark place, such as a cupboard.

4 Keep wine away from vibrating appliances, such as a washing machine, as this can disrupt the sediment.

5 Once open, recork or use a stopper, and drink within 3-4 days.



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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED'S

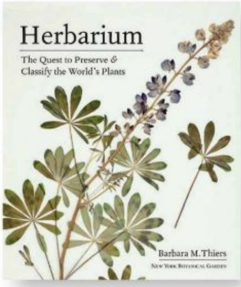
Best gardening books of the year

A look back at some of our favourite books from 2021, plus your chance to win them all

Looking brilliant in a jade glass vase is Sarah Raven's favourite chrysanthemum, 'Spider Bronze', which is one of the many planting ideas in her book *A Year Full of Flowers*, reviewed on page 102.

© JONATHAN BUCKLEY

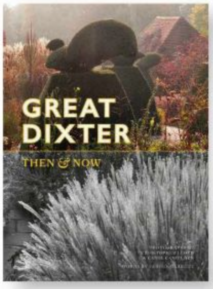
BOOKS OF THE YEAR


Herbarium
The Quest to Preserve & Classify the World's Plants
Barbara M. Thiers
New York Botanical Garden

HERBARIUM by Barbara M Thiers, Timber Press, £24, ISBN 978-1604699302

Data collection informs and steers the course of humanity, but few of us have considered the origins of plant- and fungi-based data. This book shines a light on global herbaria… framed within the expansion of colonial trade. Thiers has scoured academic libraries and museums for a cornucopia of photographs, maps, artists' renderings and specimen sheets that enrich and enliven the meaty text. A gem of a book for plant geeks, conservationists or anyone interested in natural history.

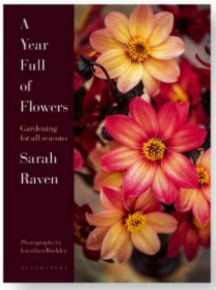
Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist and garden writer.


GREAT DIXTER
THEN & NOW

GREAT DIXTER: THEN & NOW by Fergus Garrett, photographs by Christopher Lloyd and Carol Casselden, Pimpernel Press, £12.99, ISBN 978-1910258897

The book combines early black-and-white pictures – Nathaniel Lloyd standing in the bare bones of his new garden… a tousle-haired young Christopher helping his mother plant native orchids – with a selection of Christopher's own photographic records, and pictures taken by photographer Carol Casselden. Every area of the garden gets its moment in the spotlight. Like the garden it celebrates, it is a multi-layered, diverse display of delights.

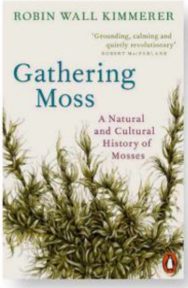
Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.


A Year Full of Flowers
Gardening for all seasons
Sarah Raven
Photographs by Jonathan Buckley
Bloomsbury

A YEAR FULL OF FLOWERS by Sarah Raven, photographs by Jonathan Buckley, Bloomsbury, £25, ISBN 978-1526626110

Part of the joy of gardening is dreaming about it. As Sarah Raven leads us from January to December through her boldly colourful gardens at Perch Hill, we suspect such a garden will remain in the dream realm, but this book is also satisfyingly practical. All Sarah's choices are deliberately easy to grow, with nothing tricksy – apart from the wildflower meadow, which Sarah admits is a long-term work in progress.

Reviewer Charlie Ryrie is a florist and stylist.


ROBIN WALL KIMMERER
'Grounding, calming and quietly revolutionary'
ROBERT MACFARLANE
Gathering Moss
A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses

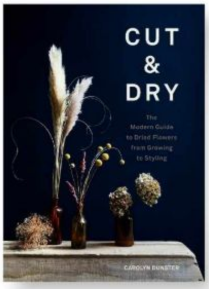
GATHERING MOSS by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Oregon State University, £17.50, ISBN 978-0870714993

Moss is an oft-overlooked group within the plant world, but this inspiring book goes a considerable way to righting this wrong. The author, a highly respected academic and member of the Native American Potawatomi Nation, has a unique approach – telling the story of mosses and what humans can learn from them through the vehicles of 'mind, body, emotion, spirit and sight'. You may never have believed it possible to feel this way about moss.

Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener and presenter.

Herbarium.

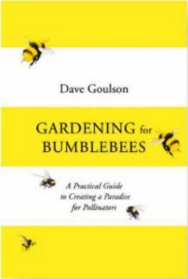
A Year Full of Flowers.


CUT & DRY
The Modern Guide to Dried Flowers from Growing to Styling
CAROLYN DUNSTER

CUT & DRY by Carolyn Dunster, Laurence King Publishing, £17.99, ISBN 978-1786278890

If dried flowers were once associated with a dusty corner of a room, Carolyn Dunster's beautiful homage to the ephemerality of plants and flowers very much brings them back into the modern, stylish home. Whether you're a floral designer, someone who enjoys crafting with botanicals, or simply someone who is seeking to add some colour and texture to your abode, this is both a valuable reference guide and a covetable coffee-table tome.

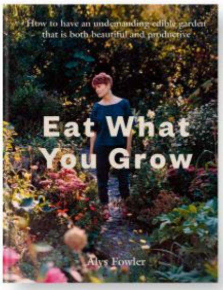
Reviewer Sonya Patel Ellis is a writer and artist.


Dave Goulson
GARDENING for BUMBLEBEES
A Practical Guide to Creating a Paradise for Pollinators

GARDENING FOR BUMBLEBEES by Dave Goulson, Square Peg, £16.99, ISBN 978-1529110289

It's not news that bumblebees and other pollinators are in dire straits. Nearly all our hay meadows disappeared in the 20th century, and those wildflowers that remain are 'often contaminated with cocktails of insecticides,' says Dave Goulson. The 22 million UK gardens could offer a lifeline. But steer clear of double flowers and popular bedding plants and instead opt for cottage-garden flowers or, even better, wildflowers.

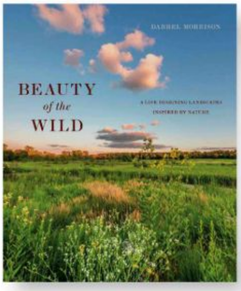
Reviewer Catherine Smalley is an editor and nature writer.


How to have an undemanding edible garden that is both beautiful and productive
Eat What You Grow
Alys Fowler

EAT WHAT YOU GROW by Alys Fowler, Kyle Books, £22, ISBN 978-0857838988

In this impressive book, Alys Fowler talks us through how to create a garden that is beautiful, bountiful and lower maintenance than your average vegetable patch. Split into three main sections, the book takes a holistic approach by building from the basics, which are edible perennials in a variety of sizes and growth habits, through fillers that self-seed to toppings – annual plants that thrive in this mixed system. Familiar faces, such as rocket, appear alongside the more unusual Korean celery.

Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist and garden writer.


DARREL MORRISON
BEAUTY of the WILD
A LIFE DESIGNING LANDSCAPES INSPIRED BY NATURE

BEAUTY OF THE WILD by Darrel Morrison, Library of American Landscape History, £30, ISBN 978-1952620287

Although they are generally an articulate lot, garden and landscape people rarely write their autobiographies. So it is a pleasure to read this one by Darrel Morrison, one of the key people in what has been one of the greatest developments in our field for decades – the American native plant movement. This book is an insight into the changes that are being made in the way that landscapes are being planted in the USA.

Reviewer Noel Kingsbury is a garden designer and writer.

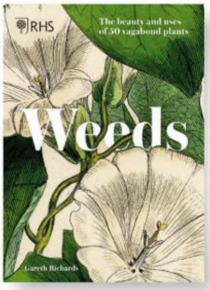
Turn the page for your chance to win all 14 books ▷

Cut & Dry.

The Basics
Umbels

Eat What You Grow.

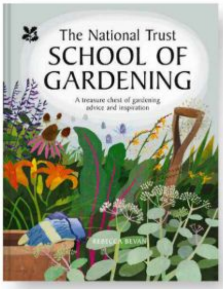
BOOKS OF THE YEAR


RHS
The beauty and uses of 50 vagabond plants
Weeds
Gareth Richards

RHS WEEDS by Gareth Richards for the RHS, Welbeck Publishing, £14.99, ISBN 978-1787394643

An oft-repeated horticultural mantra is 'weeds are plants growing where they are not wanted'. Two types of weed spread their way through this book: native species that have hopped over the fence to become weeds in our gardens and ones that have jumped the other way. Easy to read and informative, with exquisite botanical illustrations, *RHS Weeds* will certainly help most of us learn to respect weeds' backstories and uses, before uprooting them.

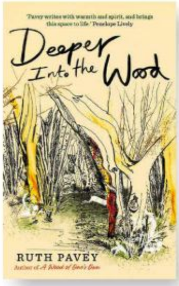
Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener and presenter.


The National Trust
SCHOOL OF GARDENING
A treasure chest of gardening advice and inspiration
REBECCA BEVAN

THE NATIONAL TRUST SCHOOL OF GARDENING by Rebecca Bevan, Pavilion Books, £20, ISBN 978-1911657156

This is a straight-talking yet decorative book, examining the craft of gardening. Twelve expansive chapters cover everyday aspects of gardening, offering guidance from creating a garden from scratch to the finesse of a dedicated cut-flower area. A National Trust garden is examined as a case study for each topic, the head gardeners revealing valuable insights into their gardens and methods.

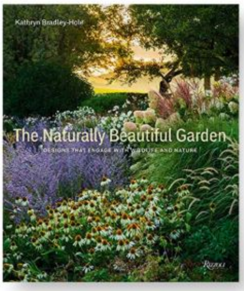
Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist and garden writer.


'Pavey writes with warmth and spirit, and brings this space to life' Penelope Lively
Deeper Into the Wood
RUTH PAVEY
Author of A Wood of One's Own

DEEPER INTO THE WOOD by Ruth Pavey, Duckworth Books, £14.99, ISBN 978-0715654279

In her debut, *A Wood of One's Own*, Pavey told the story of a scrub woodland that she has cared for over the past 20 years. Now, she reflects on its current state. Travelling up and down from her London home, Pavey charts her interactions with the wood through the course of the seasons over a single year. Sketchbook-style illustrations reveal her affection for this place. The truths that this book tells about our changing landscapes and natural world are universal.

Reviewer Catherine Smalley is a freelance writer and gardener.


Kathryn Bradley-Hole
The Naturally Beautiful Garden
DESIGNS THAT ENGAGE WITH WILDLIFE AND NATURE
Rizzoli

THE NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL GARDEN by Kathryn Bradley-Hole, Rizzoli International Publications, £45, ISBN 978-0847870097

Kathryn Bradley-Hole has broken the mould with this book, which is neither coffee table compendium nor garden-design manual, but shares the best elements of both and fits perfectly on a bedside table for late-night inspiration. Between garden descriptions, the author's thoughtful essays give readers useful ideas. At once a stunning and timely book, it is the view of ourselves as an intrinsic part of the natural world that is changing the way we garden.

Reviewer Marian Boswall is a landscape architect.

30

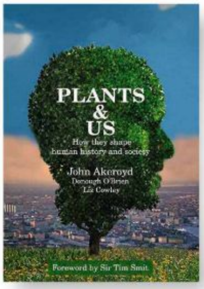
Malva sylvestris

Common mallow

RHS Weeds.

Creating an Outdoor Life for the Entire Family

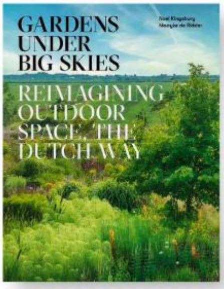
The Naturally Beautiful Garden.


PLANTS & US
How they shape human history and society
John Akeroyd
Donough O'Brien
Liz Cowley
Foreword by Sir Tim Smit

PLANTS & US by Dr John Akeroyd, Donough O'Brien and Liz Cowley, GB Publishing Org, £14.99, ISBN 978-1912576760

This impressive book is divided into 13 sections containing plant profiles and historic overviews detailing how plants from all over the world affect all aspects of our lives. It covers a diverse range of subjects from plants as heroes to their role in eating and drinking and in the arts, architecture and decoration. As well as being a thoroughly enjoyable read, this book drives home one irrefutable fact: without plants, we would not survive.

Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener and presenter.


GARDENS UNDER BIG SKIES
Noel Kingsbury
Maayke de Ridder
REIMAGINING OUTDOOR SPACE, THE DUTCH WAY

GARDENS UNDER BIG SKIES by Noel Kingsbury, photographs by Maayke de Ridder, Filbert Press, £40, ISBN 978-1999734596

The Netherlands has a global influence on contemporary horticulture, but have you ever wondered how this came about? In this wide-ranging book, we learn how land reclamation and heavy engineering artificially shaped the low-lying Dutch landscape and how the growing awareness of the environmental cost of these measures led to the desire to recreate naturalistic spaces.

Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist and garden writer.

'When I started out I used a lot of English-style borders,' Robert says. 'English gardens were my main inspiration, but now I try to create gardens that have a longer season, with a more strategic use of evergreens and big groups of perennials or grasses that make an impact over an extended period.'

Gardens Under Big Skies.

STEVE SAYERS

WIN ALL 14 OF OUR BOOKS OF THE YEAR

We have one set of all 14 of our best books from 2021 to give away. Test your gardening knowledge to win.

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GARDENS UNDER BIG SKIES Noel Kingsbury Maayke de Ridder

TO ENTER

For your chance to win, go to **gardensillustrated.com/bookscompetition** and complete your entry. You'll need to answer the following question:

Among the many fascinating plant-based facts revealed in the book *Plants & Us* by Dr John Akeroyd, Donough O'Brien and Liz Cowley, is the origin of the word grenade, which comes from which fruit?

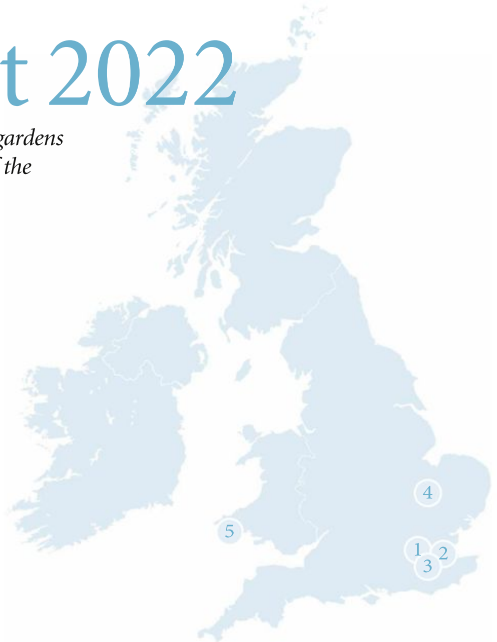
a) Quince
b) Pomegranate
c) Guava

CLOSING DATE **3 January 2022***

*All entries must be received by 11.59pm on 3 January 2022.
To enter you must be over 18 and resident in the UK, including the Channel Islands.
Full terms and conditions can be found at gardensillustrated.com/bookscompetition

Gardens to visit 2022

This new year, make a resolution to visit our collection of stunning gardens and arboretums from across the UK and Ireland. Watch the turn of the seasons through the beautifully changing flora and fauna.



1 CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

Tucked away beside the Thames is London's oldest botanic garden, established in 1673. Join Chelsea Physic Garden to welcome the coming of spring when they reopen for the year at the end of January 2022. Open Sunday to Friday, 11am to 4pm. Please check website for seasonal closures.

Chelsea, London SW3 4HS | chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

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2 CHARTWELL, NATIONAL TRUST

Enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of a 20th-century flower garden blooming at Chartwell. From spring blossom to summer roses, autumn apples to winter trees, the garden at Chartwell is a feast for the eyes, whatever the season.

Westerham, Kent TN16 1PS | nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

©National Trust Images David Sellman

3 EMMETTS GARDEN, NATIONAL TRUST

Proud plantsman's paradise year-round, Emmetts Garden is never shy of colour and beauty from a sea of bluebells and delicate roses to the fiery specimen trees of autumn – there's always something to delight the senses on a walk through the gardens.

Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6BA | nationaltrust.org.uk/emmetts-garden

4 CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDEN

Enjoy an uplifting stroll around our Winter Garden. Scented blossoms combine with striking stems, colourful foliage and tactile barks to create a winter wonderland. Designed to capture the low winter sun, the Winter Garden brightens the gloomiest of winter days. Peak season December – March.

Cambridge CB2 1JE | enquiries@botanic.cam.ac.uk | botanic.cam.ac.uk

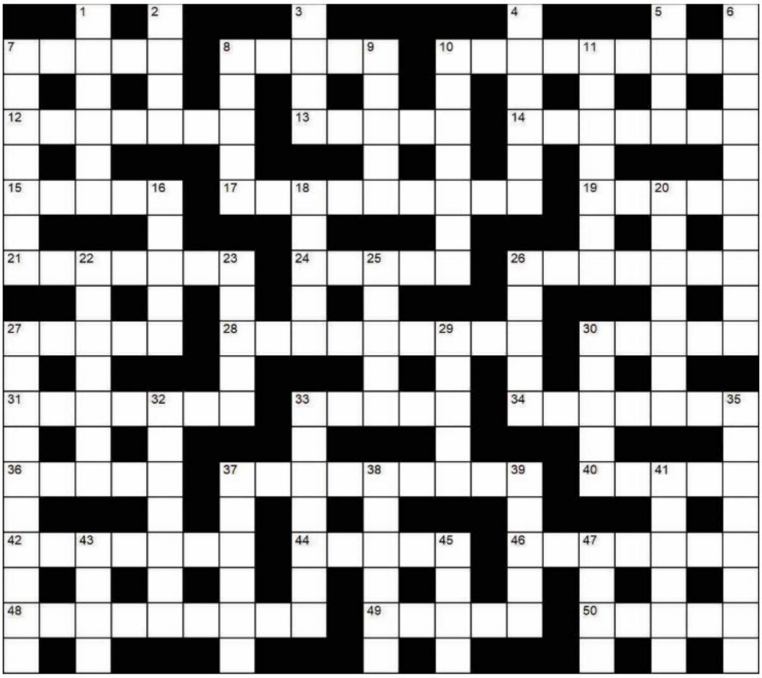
5 PICTON CASTLE GARDENS

An enchanting 13th-century castle set within 40 acres of beautiful RHS partner gardens. With stunning rhododendrons, azaleas, hydrangeas, and a recently restored historical walled garden, there is plenty of interest all year round.

Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 4AS | 01437 751326 | pictoncastle.co.uk

Christmas crossword

Test your horticultural word skill in our bumper Christmas crossword



SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED IN THE JANUARY ISSUE

SOLUTIONS TO NOVEMBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 7 Echinacea **9/21** Pinch out **11** Tagetes **12** Cardoon **13** Genus **15** Allee **17** Tie **18** Pergola **20** Big Bang **22** Lobed **24** Draba **26** Habitat **28** All Gold **31** Lydia **32** Natal lily.

DOWN 1/29 Lent lily **2** Shogun **3** Knot **4** Pascal **5** Spur **6** Thunbergia **8** Cassata **10** Neottia **13** Gypsophila **14** Stool **16** Edged **19** Ratibida **20** Bodnant **23** Betony **25** Adonis **27** Teak **30** Days.

ACROSS

7 Purple-flowering ornamental, edible herb of the onion family (5)
8 See 1 down
10 Glaswegians, say, yearn… for this popular Christmas tree that keeps its needles! (5,4)
12 Genus of 'love-in-a-mist' plant – eg all in disarray (7)
13 Yellow-flowering spiny shrub, genus *Ulex*, also called furze (5)
14 Flowering plant an embarrassing mistake? (7)
15 *Clematis* variety with cherry-pink flowers… fared badly (5)
17 An unusual strawberry cultivar… with seven small companions? (4,5)
19 A named *Euphorbia* – possessor of a golden touch! (5)
21 Wild garlic plant (7)
24 Branched inflorescences… part of fancy *Mesembryanthemum* (5)
26 Genus of plants with dense flower spikes, in Proteacea family – bask in a riot (7)
27 See 30 across
28/47 down Seasonal festival girl's *Helleborus niger* (9,4)
30/27 across Plants in *Sempervivum* genus – home to onion relatives? (5,5)
31 Becomes fully developed and ripe (7)
33 After Christmas, they're *Schlumbergera* plants (5)
34 Genus of lemon balm – mistaken as limes! (7)
36 Any plant in the Araceae family – in saguaro ideally (5)
37 Parasitic plant that might cost you a smacker or two at Christmas? (9)
40 *Agave* relative with spineless, sword-shaped leaves (5)
42 A bushy trailing tomato – butler arranged round top of mansion (7)
44 A purple-flowering, white-throated penstemon – 'glossy black bird' (5)
46 I buy a, er, unusual genus of a daisy-like plant (7)
48 An underground, living lawn aerator? (9)
49 Rose with double yellow flowers named after a Welsh county (5)
50 *Hibiscus* plants lack such a fragrant feature (5)

DOWN

1/8 across Popular Christmas song and name of a *Clematis cirrhosa* with creamy-white flowers (6,5)
2 A cutting pulled away with part of a stem (4)
3 Iris's paving stone? (4)
4 Meaning of the term 'Plena' as in *Paeonia* x *festiva* 'Rubra Plena' (6)
5 Unyielding… *Abies*, for example, before start of May (4)
6 Common name of *Viola tricolor* – for peace of mind? (10)
7 Eg Juniper's… unusual fir cone (7)
8 Leguminous plants… belonging to a certain comic Mister? (5)
9 ___flower, 'everlasting' plant, *Xerochrysum bracteatum*… used for thatching? (5)
10 A taxonomic grouping within a genus (7)
11 A cornflower with double white flowers – and a favourite Christmas film (7)
16 Succulents with rosettes of leaves – also, oddly, containing energy (5)
18 Academy Award statuette and a series of fragrant double *Dianthus* (5)
20 Removes rudimentary flowers to encourage bigger blooms (7)
22 A hellebore with creamy-rose petals turning pink – 'Virtuoso'? (7)
23 Eg jute bags often used to contain rootballs (5)
25 A *Hydrangea* collection, __ to your ears? (5)
26 Broom made from twigs tied to a handle (5)
27 Genus of 'poached egg plant': different than in elms (10)
29 Damp, as soil preferred by eg *Helenium* (5)
30 Ivy's partner at this time of year? (5)
32 A *Euphorbia* with bright-red shoot tips in winter – 'Reindeer'? (7)
33 Fragrant American shrub aka 'jessamine'… in nicest *Rumex* (7)
35 Common name of plant family including prince's feather – *Maranta* turned hot initially (8)
37 Courgette is a small one… found in bones (6)
38 Celery-scented edible herb – eg oval shaped (6)
39 Put up a garden shed, say (5)
41 Genus of plant called 'cup and saucer vine' or 'cathedral bells' (6)
43 Titchmarsh holds name of a *Camellia* with deep-red, semi-double flowers (4)
45 Plant designer ___ Kingsbury's… pink-flowering *Nerine*
47 See 28 across

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Find the perfect gifts this Christmas, page 19.

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Rockett St George 01444 253391, rockettstgeorge.co.uk

SixtySix thesixtysix.co

Sophie Allport 01778 560256, sophieallport.com

Sophie Conran 0333 240 1228, sophieconran.com

Tam Mason 07764 576162, tammason.co.uk

Toast 0333 400 5200, toa.st

VonHaus vonhaus.com

Nursery guide

Get inspired for the winter season with the best plant and bulb suppliers

OLD COURT NURSERIES

Small family-run nursery and garden. Michaelmas daisy specialists since 1906. Catalogue available online or by request.

autumnasters.co.uk
01684 540416

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chrysanthemumsdirect.co.uk
0800 046 7443

EDULIS NURSERY

The nursery grows over 600 varieties of snowdrop and the current list offers more than 300 new and old varieties for sale. Edulis nursery also specialises in shade-loving plants with a large range of ferns. There is also a range of rare and unusual edible plants.

edulis.co.uk
07802 812781

BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Specialists in hardy trees, shrubs and climbers including a huge selection of unusual species and cultivars. Informative website and a reliable mail-order service is available.

bluebellnursery.com
01530 413700

PERRIE HALE

A family-run independent nursery specialising in native and ornamental trees, shrubs and hedge plants as well as a large range of traditional fruit tree varieties. Trade discount available.

perriehale.co.uk
faye@perriehale.co.uk

MEADOWGATE NURSERY

A family-run, independent nursery, specialising in ornamental grasses. Over ten years' experience in growing a diverse range of grasses. They offer tailored advice on the use and care of the grasses they sell.

meadowgatenursery.co.uk
07736 523262

BUNKERS HILL PLANT NURSERY

A small family-run plant nursery near Woodstock, Oxfordshire, with an old-fashioned feel & traditional values. Its staff have a wide range of horticultural knowledge and it offers a huge selection of top-quality plants including rare and unusual varieties.

bunkershillgardenshop.co.uk
01869 331492

ASHWOOD NURSERIES

An independent nursery situated in the West Midlands offering many home-grown beautiful plants. Open seven days a week. Mainland UK Mail Order Service available.

ashwoodnurseries.com
01384 401996

Christmas gift guide

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thecottagegardener.co.uk
01379 443183

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thepeonygirl.com

MISTY CASHMERE

The zip neck jumper in sustainable yak yarn from Misty Cashmere will make the perfect present. Natural and undyed it is knitted in a substantial 7-gauge and is beautifully soft and wonderfully warm. Gift wrapping available. 10% discount on all knitwear with code GI10.

mistycashmere.co.uk
01273 401087

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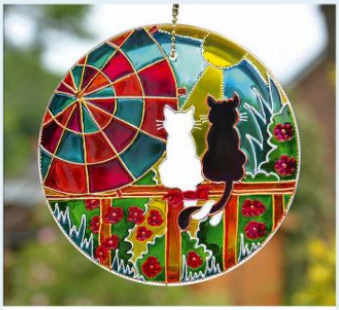
blooming-baskets.com



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ornatelylanterns.com
ornatelylanterns@gmail.com

Perfect gift ideas for the festive season

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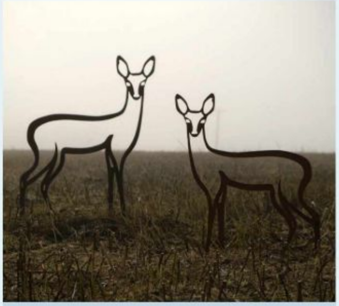
michael-michaud.com
gisela@michael-michaud.com



DEVENICK DESIGNS

'Willow and Grace' the Roe Deer and Fawn are part of the Thinimals® collection. Made from steel and supplied in a rust patina finish. Depicting the natural elegance and ethereal beauty of these animals, this will be an eye-catching sculpture in any garden setting. Visit the website to view the beautiful designs or contact Devenick Designs for more information.

devenickdesigns.co.uk
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arpestudio.co.uk
customerservice@arpestudio.co.uk

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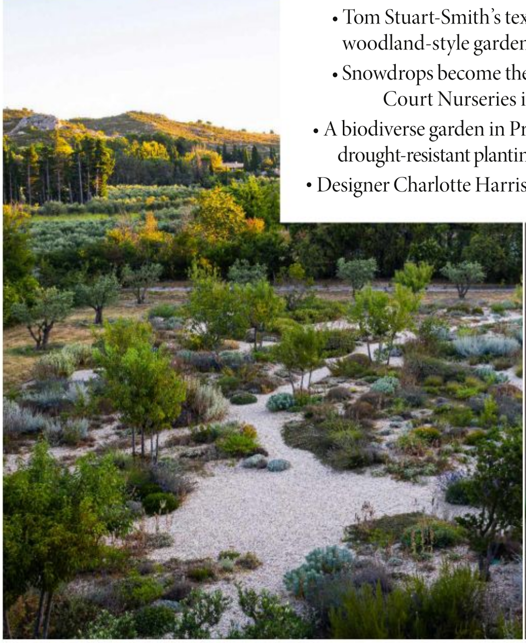

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How to spend a gardener's weekend in…

Havana, Cuba

Beyond the coffee and cigars, Cuba's capital has greener pleasures to sample, from rooftop cafés offering an abundance of organic fruit to tree-lined streets and glorious parks

Havana in December is the opposite of dark and cold, and for those who are wary of festive commerce, the attractions of this graceful old city lie elsewhere. Instead, take a more leisurely pace and allow yourself to look and listen, as the seductive strains of rumba, samba and *chachachá* drift through the bustling streets and squares.

Promenading

If you happen to arrive at night, you may find that the roads into Havana are indeed dark but they aren't quiet – and in town the streets of the city are lit up by bars and restaurants. The act of walking is a pleasure; get to know the busy thoroughfares of the old town, **Habana Vieja**. Stalwart pre-revolutionary hotels give a sense of faded glamour, seen in the piano bar at **Hotel Ambos Mundos** on Obispo, or, in Vedado, with drinks in the gardens of **Hotel Nacional de Cuba.** The newer spirit of innovation and cultural fusion can be found in the often-leafy courtyards and gardens of *paladares* (privately owned restaurants), such as the indoor-outdoor **Otramanera** in the coastal quarter of Miramar, as well as open-air Italian restaurant **La Corte del Principe**, an insider's favourite.

Hotel Ambos Mundos.

Café culture

Urban farming is part of the fabric of Havana, seen in repurposed city lots and fields around the city. It is the result of extreme hardship in the early 1990s (with the collapse of oil and fertiliser imports from the Soviet Union). *Organopónicos* are necessarily organic, cheaper, and a sustainable way for city dwellers to source home-grown fruits including pineapple, mango, papaya, guava, avocado, citrus and bananas. This adds up to an excellent breakfast, along with home-grown coffee. In Old Havana, **El Café** offers every kind of juice as well as its own sourdough, while **HAV Coffee & Art** can be found in an old mansion on Jesús Maria, serving outstanding double shots of coffee with the aid of an indestructible Italian espresso machine. Further excellent breakfasts include **La Chuchería** and **El Dandy**.

El Café.

Rooftop refuges

Aerial views of Havana should be sought out at every opportunity. Experience the sea along the Malecón, high above the hubbub, at eponymous **Malecón 663**. Or gaze at the Rio Almendares where it meets the sea from a dinner table at **Riomar**. Or, sit out on the penthouse terrace of **Café Laurent**, in Vedado, the area between Old Havana and Miramar. Nearby, three flights of winding stairs end at the rooftop bar of **El Cocinero**, above a converted factory. Back in the old town, **La Guarida** is touristy "but worth it"; **Yarini Habana** on San Isidro is new and happening; **Hotel Inglaterra** is old, with Graham Greene associations. The rooftop bar par excellence is **El del Frente**, with signature gin and tonics – and much more – overseen by perhaps the best mixer in town, who is simply known as Wilson.

Roof terrace at La Guarida.

Leafy lodgings

Gardens Havana offers not only a rooftop breakfast to rival the best in the old quarter (and its sibling operation **Twins** has fabulous views), but a wholly curated stay, in the best sense. Making use of the resident concierge is key: everything can be arranged for you, from trips to distant regions, visits to *agroturismos*, horse-riding and bird-watching. **Economía 156** is an upscale *casa particulare*, with rooms rented individually and presided over by its inspiring Cuban-British owners (see also expanding **Jesús Maria 7** and **Villa Flora** in Miramar). Public gardens – including a small one dedicated to Diana, Princess of Wales, and another to John Lennon – are pockets of calm around town. As destinations, two botanical gardens are stand outs: the **Jardín Botánico Nacional** (reachable by taxi) and closer (via bicitaxi perhaps) **Quinta de los Molinos**.

Gardens Havana.

Souvenirs

Best breakfast El Café in Old Havana

Best pick-me-up HAV Coffee & Art

Best rooftop cocktails El del Frente

Best alfresco dinner La Corte del Principe, Miramar

Best browse in old Havana Havana 1791, perfume store that uses all-natural ingredients

COMPILED BY KENDRA WILSON. PHOTOGRAHS: WILLIAM MULLINS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ILPO MUSTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; HEMIS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; GARDENS HAVANA.

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